



This material has been provided by Asbury Theological Seminary in good faith of following ethical procedures in its production and end use.

The Copyright law of the united States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyright material. Under certain condition specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to finish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be *“used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.”* If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.

Contact

B.L. Fisher Library
Asbury Theological Seminary
204 N. Lexington Ave.
Wilmore, KY 40390

B.L. Fisher Library’s Digital Content
place.asburyseminary.edu



Asbury Theological Seminary
205 North Lexington Avenue
Wilmore, Kentucky 40390

800.2ASBURY
asburyseminary.edu

SYNCRETISM, GNOSTICISM AND JUDAISM
A STUDY IN NEW TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Theology

by
S. B. Alexander
February 1968

SYNCRETISM, GNOSTICISM AND JUDAISM
A STUDY IN NEW TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Degree
Master of Theology

Approved:

Wilber T. Dayton
First Reader

Robert A. Tramm
Second Reader

by
S. B. Alexander

February 1968

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout the thesis, unless otherwise indicated, English Biblical references are taken from the American Standard Version and Greek references, from the Nestle's Text.

The author wishes to express his deep appreciation to the following persons:

To Dr. Dayton for his encouragement and contributions to the writing of this thesis;

To Dean Traina for his personal interest;

To Mr. Onva Boshears for his advice as to the format;

To Mrs. William Cessna for her work on the composition of the material and typing thereof;

To World Gospel Mission for the opportunity to be involved in this research;

And most of all to my long suffering wife, Ruth, who hasn't known me when I did not have this thesis to complete.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| The Problem | 2 |
| Justification of the Study | 5 |
| Definitions | 5 |
| Procedure | 6 |
| Limitations | 8 |
| II. ANCIENT ISRAEL - SYNCRETISTIC PATTERN ESTABLISHED | 10 |
| The Standard Established | 11 |
| Leadership under Torah | 13 |
| Priests | 13 |
| Prophets | 15 |
| Rulers | 15 |
| The Syncretistic and Oscillatory Pattern of | |
| Israel's Faith | 16 |
| False Leadership | 24 |
| Priests | 24 |
| Prophets | 27 |
| Shepherds | 31 |
| Summary | 32 |
| III. EARLY JUDAISM - SYNCRETISTIC PATTERN CONTINUES . . | 34 |
| Oriental Period | 35 |
| Fall of Jerusalem | 35 |

| CHAPTER | v PAGE |
|--|-----------|
| Post War Conditions | 35 |
| The Return | 36 |
| Ezra and Nehemiah - Torah Enthroned | 38 |
| The Hellenistic Era | 43 |
| The Greek Influx | 43 |
| Antiochus IV Epiphanes | 45 |
| Maccabees and the Hasmonean Dynasty | 46 |
| The Herods and the Romans | 48 |
| Summary | 49 |
| IV. HELLENIZATION OF PALESTINE: THE CLIMATE OF | |
| SYNCRETISM | 50 |
| Normative Judaism | 51 |
| The Rabbinic and Biblical Evidence | 53 |
| Jewish Greek Literature | 59 |
| Non-Jewish Testimony | 59 |
| Archaeology | 60 |
| Funerary Evidence | 61 |
| Synagogic Evidence | 63 |
| Magical Material | 65 |
| Summary | 67 |
| V. JEWISH SECTARIANISM - MODULATIONS OF JEWISH | |
| HELLENISM | 69 |
| The Four Main Sects | 70 |
| The Sadducees | 70 |

| CHAPTER | vi PAGE |
|---|------------|
| Pharisees | 72 |
| Essenes | 75 |
| Zealots | 78 |
| Baptist NonConformist Movement | 78 |
| Justin's List of Sects | 78 |
| Hegessipus' List of Sects | 80 |
| Epiphenius' List of Sects | 82 |
| Synthesis: Clue to Widespread Movement . . . | 84 |
| Dead Sea Scrolls: Supporting Evidence . . . | 85 |
| Qumran Covenanters | 88 |
| Summary | 94 |
| VI. JUDAISM AND GNOSIS: THE ORIGINS OF GNOSTIC | |
| SYNCRETISM | 96 |
| Evidence of the Church Fathers | 96 |
| Pseudo-Clementine Studies | 103 |
| Letters of Ignatius | 106 |
| Mandaean Studies | 108 |
| Hermetica | 116 |
| Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library | 117 |
| Summary | 120 |
| VII. JEWISH GNOSTIC THOUGHT: PRECURSOR OF THE CHRISTIAN | |
| PROBLEM | 124 |
| The Interrelationship of Nomistic and Apocalyptic | |
| Judaism | 124 |

| CHAPTER | vii PAGE |
|--|-------------|
| Apocalyptic Literature | 127 |
| Rabbinic Literature | 131 |
| Philo | 139 |
| Thematic Studies | 140 |
| Summary | 142 |
| VIII. THE CONNECTING LINKS: JUDAISM TO CHRISTIANITY, | |
| PALESTINE TO ASIA MINOR | 144 |
| The Diaspora and Palestine | 144 |
| The Extent of the Diaspora | 146 |
| Jewish | 146 |
| Samaritan | 147 |
| Karaites | 147 |
| Diversity in the Diaspora | 148 |
| Egypt | 148 |
| Elephantine Colony | 148 |
| Leontopolis | 149 |
| Therapeutae | 149 |
| Greek Jews | 149 |
| Dositheans | 150 |
| Babylon | 150 |
| Rome | 151 |
| Diaspora Hellenistic | 152 |
| Jews in Asia Minor | 152 |
| Syncretistic Cults | 153 |

| CHAPTER | viii PAGE |
|---|--------------|
| Magic | 155 |
| Sectaries | 155 |
| Geographical Considerations of Gnosticism . . . | 160 |
| Christianity Inherited Jewish Variety | 163 |
| Christianity in Asia Minor | 166 |
| Meander-Lycus Valley | 167 |
| Cerinthus | 169 |
| Summary | 171 |
| IX. THE NEW STANDARD: CONTINUITY BUT CONFRONTATION . | 173 |
| Ministry of Jesus | 173 |
| Zealots | 174 |
| Herodians | 174 |
| Sadducees | 174 |
| Pharisees | 175 |
| The Kingdom is Come | 176 |
| Jesus' Warnings | 177 |
| The New Standard | 180 |
| The Early Confrontations of the Standard . . . | 185 |
| Judaism | 185 |
| Nomistic Judaizers | 187 |
| Galatians | 189 |
| Romans | 193 |
| Summary | 195 |
| X. JEWISH GNOSTICISM: THE INITIAL CONFLICT WITH SYNCRETISM | 197 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| CHAPTER | ix PAGE |
| The Colossian Heresy | 198 |
| The Problem in the Pastoral Epistles | 215 |
| Date | 215 |
| The Heresy in the Pastorals | 218 |
| The Johannine Epistles and False Teaching . . . | 227 |
| Summary | 233 |
| XI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS | 235 |
| Summary | 235 |
| Conclusions | 236 |
| Implications | 237 |
| Syncretism | 238 |
| Gnosticism | 243 |
| Further Possible New Testament Studies | 246 |
| Epilogue | 247 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 248 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The forces of ecumenicity are so strong that many have forgotten that one of the constant problems of the Church is to maintain identity separate from the world and the other religions, and yet to remain in contact with the world. This situation presents the Church with the problem of syncretism - that is, assimilation of or into the culture and local religion. Related to this is the doctrinal issue of false teaching. False teaching, if allowed to continue, may lead to its acceptance and finally to a loss of nerve in a church or denomination tolerating it.

Interest in this study arose out of discussions, first with an ecumenical theologian who had no answer to the question: "What do the ecumenical theologians do with the New Testament teaching on false doctrine?" and second, with one versed in separatist doctrine who seemingly had scriptural warranty for his position on the same question. The intention was to determine the New Testament attitude to false teaching. In the actual pursuit of this research, however, the realization of the constant danger of syncretism and the applicability to missions and contemporary theology became the dominant concern. Syncretism was seen to be the essential problem.

I. THE PROBLEM

The hypothesis of this study is that false teaching in the form of syncretistic gnosticism appeared early in the New Testament Churches by assimilation from Judaism rather than purely Hellenistic sources. Therefore, it will be necessary to examine the evidences for the existence of syncretism in Jewish religion which could eventually take the form of an incipient gnosticism in New Testament times. It is hoped that this hypothesis, if it can be sustained, will then present the best explanation for (a) the type of error opposed in certain portions of the New Testament, and for (b) the early appearance of syncretistic gnosticism in the Church. If so, Christianity will be shown to have derived from Jewish sources not only its initial revelation, but also some of its major problems.

There is a continuity between the Old Covenant and the New; the people of Israel and the Church, which is the New Israel. The God of the Old Testament is the Christian God revealed in Jesus Christ. To a certain extent there is also continuity in the problems faced. It was natural that the Church should inherit the Jewish problem before facing it in greater measure directly. Revealed religion was always being corrupted by the instinct of man for a closed world view of the senses. The One in cultic worship tended to become the Many. Two opposite tendencies are to be found in religion: one moves from polytheism to monotheism, the other moves from monotheism to

3

pölytheism. "By the hypostatization of qualities and functions a single god can disintegrate into many while by various processes many may give place to one...."¹ The constant tendency within Israel was to provide Jehovah with consorts and incorporate Baal worship into the cult.

Later, the problem for Judaism was its assimilation into Hellenism. The Maccabean Revolt was the conservative reaction to this process. However, Hellenization was so pervasive that under the Hasmoneans, successors to the Maccabees, Judaism was not immune to its influence. One view held by many, is that Judaism was a monolithic structure developed under Ezra and Nehemiah, a force which withstood the onslaught of Hellenistic syncretism, but increasingly this view is being rejected. Judaism may not have been assimilated into Hellenism, but it received much of Hellenistic culture.

Many have said that Judaism was a religion of heterodoxy yet orthopraxy. Now, especially since the Dead Sea discoveries, it is being recognized that Judaism was varied both in dogma and practice.

One of the products of the Hellenization process was Gnosticism of the second century A.D. which had many features,

¹H. H. Rowley, From Moses to Qumran (New York: Association Press, 1963), p. 40.

although scholars cannot agree on its exact composition. There were various types of gnostic groups; some were magical, others were more philosophical. Some were pagan, others called themselves Christian. These groups interpenetrated each other; Nag Hammadi has produced finds of Christian and non-Christian gnostic works. Gnosticism was by far a greater threat to the earliest existence of the Christian Church than were the Judaizers. In its various forms Gnosticism tried to identify Christianity with Greek philosophy, astrology, magic and mysticism. Some groups went in ascetic directions; others became licentious because of a dualistic view of matter as evil, with only the spiritual being good.

The Tübingen school identified much of the polemic in the New Testament as against gnostics, so they placed New Testament books in the second century. Textual evidence for the dating of the Scriptures and now the evidence for an incipient gnosticism in Judaism disproves the Tübingen hypothesis. However, some of the insights of this school as to the presence of a gnosticism in the New Testament are validated. Harnack's view of gnosticism, as the extreme Hellenization of Christianity, is also disproved by the presence of Hellenistic features within Judaism before the split with Christianity.

The above data indicate that Christianity met the problem of syncretism early in its history because it met it in Jewish dress.

II. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The value of this study is the provision of historical evidence to support the presence of Jewish "gnosis" in the New Testament times, thus enabling a more precise identification of the opponents against which the New Testament polemic is directed. This study also supports careful exegesis of relevant passages so that radical form critical, and "religionsgeschichte" methods are not necessary to prove the presence of a "false gnosis." An incidental value of this study is that it destroys one argument for late dating of the New Testament sections which reflect the opposition to "gnosis" or an awareness of gnostic concepts.

III. DEFINITIONS

Syncretism. The term usually means the "combination of or reconciliation of differing beliefs in religions" (Webster). The extent to which the process occurs varies. In Judaism the tendency was more often to assimilate extraneous material rather than to be assimilated, although crude forms of identification did take place.

Gnosticism. There is a real lack of accord among scholars about the meaning and use of this term. Some prefer to save it for use only for that particular phenomenon of the second century A.D. which is known by that name. Others

relate it to the tendencies which led toward the second century elements. Mediating solutions have arisen, suggesting that terms such as pre-gnosticism, "gnosis" or incipient gnosticism are more appropriate for the influences which eventually led to gnosticism proper. When the term Jewish "gnosis" or gnosticism is used in this paper, it should be understood in the above sense and not in relation to the more fully developed second century heresy.

Hellenization. The term is used in the sense of the cultural melting pot which was given impetus by Alexander the Great when he tried to syncretize all the cultures and religions with which he came in contact. Behind Hellenization was the philosophy of Plato, who saw in every existing god only a shadow of the Ideal. If all gods are shadows, then they can be identified with each other because only one God is being worshipped but by different means and modes.

Hellenization, then, was more than an influx of Greek thought and philosophy; it represented a synthesis of oriental and occidental religions and culture in varying degrees of homogeneity.

IV. PROCEDURE

The method of approach is to determine the establishment of the standards by which truth was judged under the Old Covenant and then under the New Covenant.

The historical survey method is used first to present the problem that ancient Israel had with idolatry, which continued into early Judaism, and which moved toward relationships with Hellenistic culture.

Following this, the procedure is changed because the records of Judaism relating to the Graeco-Roman period are heavily censored sources. Evidence is gathered from different areas of study to show that Hellenization deeply penetrated Judaism in Palestine, thus reducing the distinction between Diasporic and Palestinian Judaism. Judaism is suggested to be more varied than the normative Judaism of Pharisaism and the Rabbis. The evidence for the rise of gnosticism from a Jewish background has not received general acceptance by contemporary scholars, but the evidence from the Dead Sea scrolls and Nag Hammadi has caused a change in thinking. Renewed studies in the patristics, more access to Jewish scholarship, and more unbiased Jewish scholarship have given new strength in the area of Jewish studies.

Then the Greek historians and the Patristic evidence are briefly reviewed with special emphasis on the witness to a sectarian non-conformity.

Up to this point the geographical interest has been concentrated on Palestine because this was considered the citadel of "normative Judaism." Proof of diversity within these confines is a greater step than to judge all Diasporic Judaism by Philo and Hermetica.

Evidence that the Gnostic movement had its proximate origins from Judaism is then presented from various areas of study. Certain bodies of Jewish literature are researched for their findings related to the presence of mysticism or Gnosis.

The next step is to show the connection between the above factors in Judaism and the problems of the Christian Church, especially that of Asia Minor. Attention now turns to Asia Minor because so much of the New Testament literature (particularly those books that show opposition to the elements of Gnosis) originated in that area. The Jewish population in Asia Minor was considerable and varied in practice. The history and traditions of the region support this position. The new standard of the new covenant is then presented in Jesus Christ's ministry and the primitive church; and the opposition is met from the sects and the Judaizers.

The New Testament is then examined for evidence of Jewish Gnosticism. Colossians is used as an exegetical test case because, in spite of textual difficulties, it presents apparent theosophical qualities of the error. Other cases of syncretism are also dealt with briefly. A summary and a conclusion are provided with implications for the modern day.

V. LIMITATIONS

Since so much has already been done by others in the exegesis of New Testament passages, this research is

limited largely to the "religion geschichte" approach. Such background material makes the presence of Jewish "gnosis" in the New Testament more plausible.

CHAPTER II

ANCIENT ISRAEL - SYNCRETISTIC PATTERN ESTABLISHED

Many times the historical overview is what provides the understanding for the particular period or subject under study. More and more the Jewish background of the New Testament is being recovered. The life of the New Israel, of the ekklesia, cannot be severed from the life of the people of Israel under the Sinai Covenant.

The reaction of Ancient Israel to the culture around her and her tendency to apostatize are instructive when studied century by century. Her constant tendency to hypostatize the attributes of God or assimilate other gods is observed as well as the importance of her leadership. The oscillation between pure and mixed religion noted in the Old Testament, is mostly a record of what the leaders determined.

Constantly, the people are faced with the decision of Jehovah or Baal, and repeatedly they fail. Much of the polemic in the Old Testament was directed against the prophets, priests and rulers (Shepherds); and in order to gain full-orbed understanding of the New Testament warnings against false prophets, false teachers and false leaders, one has to examine the Old Testament record.

I. THE STANDARD ESTABLISHED

The normative religion of the Hebrews was established during the Mosaic period. The skepticism of modern critical scholars, who date the prophets before the law, in agreement with Wellhausen's theory of religious development, has been largely repudiated by many scholars. Thus Albright pungently states, "It is sheer hypercriticism to deny the substantially Mosaic character of the pentateuchal tradition."¹ The position taken in this paper is in agreement with Kaufmann who states that the "Torah. . . is the literary product of the earliest stage of Israelite religion, the stage prior to literary prophecy. . . Its sources are demonstrably ancient - not in part, not in their general content, but in their entirety, even to their language and formation."²

The prophets, therefore, were reformers, not innovators. They pointed to the Torah as the standard for the nation. What, then, were the distinctives of Israelite religion? Albright states them as:

"the belief in the existence of only one God,
who is the creator of the world and the giver of

¹W. F. Albright, Archaeology of Palestine, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961), p. 225; and cf. H. H. Rowley, From Moses to Qumran, (New York: Association Press, 1963), p. 36.

²Y. Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, translated and abridged by Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 2.

all life; the belief that God is holy and just without sexuality or mythology; the belief that God is invisible to men except under special conditions and that no graphic nor plastic representation of Him is permissible; the belief that God is not restricted to any part of His creation, but is equally at home in heaven, in the desert, or in Palestine; the belief that God is so far superior to all created beings, whether heavenly bodies, angelic messengers, demons, or false gods, that He remains absolutely unique; the belief that God has chosen Israel by formal compact to be His favored People, guided exclusively by laws imposed by Him."³

Albright's summary gives the essence of the Israelite religion and emphasizes the difference between it and the religions of the surrounding nations - no mythopoeetry, no images, no pantheon, no female counterpart, no limitation. The three main factors of the Israelite faith to be obtained from the summary are Monotheism (as defined by W. F. Albright⁴), convenantal relationship, and convenantal responsibility, i.e., Torah.

Basic to this discussion is the Covenant, i.e., the bilateral compact whereby Yahweh chose Israel to be His people, and Israel accepted Yahweh as their God. This relationship placed a responsibility upon Israel as the lesser party.

³W. F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), p. 116, cited by G. E. Wright The Old Testament Against Its Environment (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1950), p. 29.

⁴W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 270 ff.; and cf. Rowley, op. cit., p. 40.

13

Kraus says, "The unconditional requirement for the service of Yahweh that was laid down in the Covenant was the renunciation of all heathen gods and their cults."⁵ "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images..." (Ex. 20: 2-4). The Covenantal relationship was the basis for God's blessing or curse upon Israel, determined by obedience (Deut. 28ff).

II. LEADERSHIP UNDER TORAH

The Priests led in worship, the prophets declared God's message, and the rulers governed the people under the covenantal relationship "hedge", the Torah.

Priests

In Israel's cult, the priests controlled and regulated the whole relationship of the Yahweh community with its god. The main functions of the priests were to take charge of the sanctuary and to minister at the altar (Num. 18: 1-5) and to give the oracles (Deut. 33:10; cf Hag. 2:11, 12; Mal. 2:7). They were the repository of learning and tradition - both sacred and secular - of medical, biological, ethical, and legal

⁵H. J. Kraus, Worship in Israel (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), p. 191.

14
knowledge which they passed on. Some decisions were made in accordance with levitical formulae, others by the casting of sacred lots. The oracles given, and decisions made on the basis of the Torah, were called "Toroth" (teachings). Thus, one of the main functions of the priest was a teaching ministry.⁶

Against this background, the Levitical system decreed that anyone not of Aaronic descent who attempted this ministry was to be put to death (Num. 3:10, 18:7). Examples of divine displeasure are given in the deaths of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16). Cultic practices had to be properly observed⁷; deformed or blemished priests, even though of Aaronic birthright, could not serve (Lev. 21:5); nor could eunuchs (Lev. 21:5). Male and female temple prostitutes were foreign to the levitical concept (Deut. 23:17). It was implicit that the Priests of Yahweh should not mix the worship of Yahweh with that of other gods. Other gods were not approved, so their priests were despised.

Falsity was considered to be prevalent in cultic practices, in legitimacy of the priesthood, and polytheistic tendencies. Not until the time of the prophets was there any complaint related to the teaching aspect of the priesthood (Hos. 4:5, 6; Mic. 3:11).

⁶T. Henshaw, The Latter Prophets (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p. 304; and Kraus, op. cit., p. 100.

⁷Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire and died, (Lev. 10:1, 2).

Prophets

The true prophet was the spokesman of God to the nation. Therefore, a test was provided in order to discern the true prophet. The test was that a prophet must be judged both on the content of his message and the outcome of his predictions. Deuteronomy 8:22 says the genuineness of a prophet is determined by the fulfillment of his predictions; the true prophet's predictions come to pass, whereas those of the false do not. However, the moral and spiritual content of the message must also be considered. Deut. 13:1-5 points out that it is possible for a prophet to predict rightly and yet not be acceptable to Israel. As Henshaw put it:

"No prophet who invites the people to serve other gods is to be listened to under any circumstances. The prediction of such a prophet may be fulfilled but Yahweh has allowed his prediction to come to pass to test the loyalty of the people."⁸

Such a prophet was to be put to death. The injunction applies not only to one who forthtells but miracle workers and "dreamers."

Rulers

Rulers were to be righteous and just men (Ex. 18:21), incorrupt (Ex. 23:8), and impartial (Deut. 16:19). In the antiphonal ceremony of blessings and cursings, a cursing was to be pronounced upon corrupt and partial justice (Deut.

⁸Henshaw, op. cit., p. 67.

16

27:19). These factors applied to the elders, priests, judges and, later, kings because all of these groups administered justice

A prophetic statement is made that the tribes would demand a king. Certain commandments were to be observed by royalty. The king was not to multiply horses, wives or wealth to himself, and he was to meditate upon these matters that he might learn to fear Yahweh and that he would not regard himself as superior to other Israelites (Lev. 17:14ff; cf. I Sam. 8).

Even while the standard was being set, Moses foretold partly on the basis of his own experience with Israel (Deut. 31:26-30) that the people would soon depart from the standard. The Book of Judges describes the pattern of Israel's tendency to apostatize.

III. THE SYNCRETISTIC AND OSCILLATORY PATTERN OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

The origin of the problem is explained in the first two chapters of Judges. The first factor was that the tribes did not get rid of all the Canaanites. The first chapter of Judges describes the various towns and sections where the Israelites were unable or did not bother to eliminate or drive out the inhabitants. Thus the Canaanite religion, theory and cult, were permitted to exist along with Israelite worship of Yahweh. The second factor was the death of all the generation who had seen the mighty acts of God, the evidence

17

of God's mighty power in history, and the obvious sign of His immanent presence; and the new generations, having come from a nomadic background, would logically look to the Canaanites for aid in agrarian practices and material culture (Jud. 2:10).

"It was inevitable that some Israelites should view the agrarian religion as a necessary part of agrarian life and begin to propitiate the gods of fertility."⁹

The story of Judges has an oscillatory pattern. Sin and idolatry brought oppression; the oppression caused the Israelites to cry unto Yahweh. In response, Yahweh sent charismatic leaders, the judges, to deliver Israel; but as soon as danger was past, the people became disobedient again (Judg. 2:12-19).

This vacillating pattern is also displayed in the historical books of the monarchic period. "The oscillation between syncretism and reform coincident with shifts in the national policy will surely have been noticed."¹⁰

The reign of David is considered the golden age of the worship of Yahweh, and as each king is mentioned, a description is given, "he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord" or "he did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord," (II. Chr. 20:32, 21:6), always using David as the criterion.

⁹J. Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 156.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 298.

Scholars who emphasize the "interacting tension of two opposing forces as the chief characteristic of Israel's religious history,"¹¹ do so with much authority. It would be wrong, however, to infer that the change from idolatry to purity of worship had a solidarity of movement. Kaufmann makes a strong point when he states that the court often introduced foreign deities and that thus the popular religion could not be taxed with supporting them. Solomon erected altars to Chemoth, Molech and Ashtoreh for his foreign wives. The Queens, Maacah (mother of Asa), Jezebel, and Athaliah were responsible for introducing foreign cults into Judah and Israel.

Manasseh converted the Temple of Yahweh into a pantheon (II Kings 21:4ff). He built altars to the host of heaven and set up an image of Asherah in it. Kaufmann argues that this was the one attempt at syncretism in the true sense of amalgam; yet it was a royal cult.¹²

The popular religion was Yahwehism, but there was a "vestigial idolatry, a vulgar superstition of the sort that the ignorant level of monotheistic peoples practice today."¹³

¹¹Herbert F. Hahn, Old Testament in Modern Research (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press 1954), p. 116.

¹²Y. Kaufmann The Religion of Israel, p. 138ff.

¹³Ibid., p. 142.

Kaufmann is concerned with denying syncretistic tendencies in Israel and goes too far in making his point. The truth more surely lies in understanding the religious position as more fluid and non-polar. Canaanite cultic materials were incorporated into Israel's religious life, although transmuted by the Israelite faith, e.g., the Temple plan,¹⁴ which did not cause prophetic indignation. There was the practice of fetishism against which the Biblical polemic is mainly directed, and surely there would have been those who accepted pagan mythological polytheism in toto.¹⁵ However, "the true objects of the Biblical polemic are either faults of monotheism (e.g., the overvaluation of the cult)"¹⁶ or idolatry, whether a caricature of, or vestigial, or mythological paganism.

The prophets addressed wavering monotheists, not a pagan audience. Elijah gave an alternative to his audience: either Yahweh or Baal; you cannot have both. The alternative could not have been offered to a true pagan who could accept any new god into his pantheon.¹⁷

The people were not abandoning Yahweh, they were merely trying to synthesize worship of Him with the aspects of Canaanite

¹⁴W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity, p. 293ff.

¹⁵Moshe Greenberg, "Kaufmann On The Bible," Judaism, XIII (Winter, 1964), p. 88.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 88.

worship which seemed necessary in their agricultural setting. In "the vast mess of debris dug out of Israelite towns there is yet to be found an image of a male deity."¹⁸ For example, there was no representation of Yahweh, but from the time of Judges, the Israelites possessed small plaques or figurines of the Canaanite fertility and mother goddesses in great number.¹⁹ The two young bulls erected by Jereboam at Dan and Bethel should not be considered as representations of God, but the visible pedestal on which the invisible Yahweh stood,²⁰ which compared to the "mercy seat" and the cherubim in the Temple at Jerusalem. Thus, the tendency was to try and harmonize Israelite and Canaanite religions by providing Yahweh with a female consort so that the fertility dramas could be incorporated in Yahweh worship.

Semantics played a part, in that Yahweh - Baal (Lord Yahweh) could be dangerously identified with the other Baals - Canaanite, Tyrian etc.²¹ In the same manner, perhaps, the doctrines of the Gnostics could develop from New Testament and other sources in later times.

¹⁸G. E. Wright, The Old Testament Against Its Environment, p. 24.

¹⁹Ibid., and cf. W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity, p. 311.

²⁰Ibid., Albright, p. 299.

²¹Ibid., p. 286.

Baalistic practices were being adapted to the local cult of Yahweh in open air shrines and rustic altars; for example, planting of sacred trees called Asherah, and building of altars of incense known as "hamman".²² Figurines of female goddesses have already been mentioned; besides this and in spite of Kaufmann's saying that the foreign cults were related to royal circles almost exclusively, "it is certain that there was constant percolation of novel religious systems and practices.... As Israel became more wealthy and as more and more Israelites took an active part in commerce, the danger of such Pagan intrusion became correspondingly greater."²³

Astral cults (Amos 5:26, Zeph. 1:5ff; Jer. 8:1ff; II Kings 23:7), including the Assyrian sun god Shamash (II Kings. 23: 11), Milcom (Moloch: Zeph. 1:4ff; Jer. 7:36), Ishtar the Queen of Heaven (II Kings.23:7), Tammuz (Ezek. 8), and "other gods" which Israel "knew not" (Jer. 7:9; 19:4; 44:3) were introduced. Some of the references were to the public cults; others refer to private practices of individuals. To the first category belongs the cult of human sacrifice in Topheth to Moloch and the cults established by Manasseh etc. in the Temple; the second category includes the astral cults practiced on roof tops (Zeph. 1:4ff) and the women's worship of the queen of heaven (Jer. 7:17ff; 44:15ff).²⁴

²²Ibid., p. 310.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Y. Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, p. 144.

Idolatry certainly caused Israelite worship to degenerate, even if one accepts Kaufmann's position that "the biblical struggle with idolatry restricts itself entirely to the area of cult and ritual...(because)...the cult is decisive."²⁵ He states further:

"YHWH was god, but the vulgar believed also in the virtue of idols, amulets, spells and pagan rites; saw no harm in traffic with satyrs and demons; believed in the influence of the host of heaven. They did not practise a genuine mythological cult of pagan gods, (sic) but they did not reject the host of anonymous elilim and teraphim....Besides this, there was at times another form of 'idolatry:' the worship of YHWH in pagan ways."²⁶

This is an admission by Kaufmann of some syncretistic tendencies in Israel. His position is not so different from other scholars. Cult may be decisive but it cannot be severed from belief. It is quite evident that in the history of Ancient Israel there was a tension between pure and syncretic worship, and that the folk religion incorporated factors of pagan worship. This was, first, in order to identify with the culture in which they lived, and second, because there was the belief in another power realm apart from Yahweh.

²⁵Ibid., p. 147.

²⁶Ibid., p. 142.

The Biblical polemic is also directed against the false security resulting from a trust in the everlasting quality of the Davidic covenant and in conformity to the cultic practices. It was a trust in externals rather than internal devotion.²⁷ This is most graphically portrayed in prophetic reaction after Josiah's reforms. The radical cleansing of the land from pagan cults and paganised Yahwehism was recognized as being of God and meritorious. The reform may be looked upon as a return to the conditions of the Sinaitic covenant but linked with the Davidic covenant.²⁸ Therein lay the danger. Jeremiah complained that there was increased cultic activity without real return to the ancient paths (Jer. 6:16-21). There was a claim that the law was with them (Jer. 8:8ff), but the rediscovered law merely fortified the false sense of security. The demands of the Sinaitic covenant were supposed to have been met. Thus it became "the handmaid of the Davidic covenant, guaranteeing the permanence of Temple, dynasty, and state. The theology of the law had, indeed, been made into a caricature of itself, automatic protection bought by external compliance."²⁹ Jeremiah stood in the gates of the Temple and prophesied on the futility of worship there if the ethical code was not observed

²⁷J. Bright, op. cit., p. 302.

²⁸H. J. Kraus, op. cit., p. 191.

²⁹J. Bright, op. cit.

24

(Jer. 7:1ff). The sense of security based on observing the Sinaitic covenant was falsely grounded because the covenant was not being observed.

The other prophets, psalmists, and wisdom writers also spoke regarding the necessity of inner response to Yahweh (Ps. 85:10; Prov. 3:3; 14:21, 22; 20:28; 21:21; Hos. 4:1, 12:6; Mic. 6:8). They subordinated cultic practice to the essential of heart religion, (Ps. 51:16, 17; I Sam. 15:22; Ps. 50:8ff; 69:31; Eccl. 5:1; Isa. 1:11ff; 29:13ff; Jer. 6:20, 14:12; Amos 5:21ff; Mic. 6:6ff). Overvaluation of the cult, formalism, dependence on external form and practices, was the canker at the heart of Israel.³⁰ When this was the case, syncretistic practices and beliefs could easily gain a foothold.

IV. FALSE LEADERSHIP

The Bible makes it plain that much of the responsibility rested on the shoulders of the leaders.

Priests

Priests of other gods were to be eliminated from Israel. They had no right in Israel. So, for example, when Jehu destroyed the Tyrian Baal cult, he killed both priests and prophets. The prophets of Baal with whom Elijah contested,

³⁰Ibid., p. 301ff.

were cultic, that is, they were closely related to, if not part of, the priesthood of Baal. So a priesthood should be considered as having been eliminated. In the reform of Josiah the personnel of the pagan cults, including eunuch priests and religious prostitutes of both sexes, were put to death.³¹

Priests of Yahweh who ministered other than at Jerusalem were also frowned upon. Thus, during Josiah's reform, the outlying "high places" and shrines were closed and the rural priests invited to Jerusalem to take their place among the Temple clerics (II Kings 23:8).

Priests other than of Aaronic descent were not recognized by Judahites as legitimate; when Jereboam appointed priests at Bethel and Dan "which were not of the sons of Levi," the writer of Kings is pointing out the illegitimacy of the northern priesthood (I Kings 12:31). This, of course, was directly in line with the Pentateuchal tradition.

The Priesthood was condemned as corrupt by the prophets. Hosea, in his warnings to North Israel, charged that the priests of the north were rejected of God (Hos. 4:4-10) because they had rejected knowledge "viz. of god's revealed will (which was theoretically a deposit in the

³¹Ibid., p. 297.

priestly order,"³² and neglected the Torah of which the priesthood was a depository.³³ Hosea therefore declared that because of the priests' disregard of the Torah, the people were destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:5, 6). Because the Northern priests were not Aaronic, it is possible that they did not fall heir to the oral traditions and written law of Pentateuchal authority. Hosea's charge was also that the priests were corrupt and unethical, committing murder and abusing the law of asylum (Hos. 6:9). Harper sees in Hos. 4:10 a reference to the incorporation into Yahweh worship of a part of the Baal cult in which every woman was required to prostitute herself once in the Temple with a priest.³⁴ The prophets of the Southern Kingdom made similar charges of corruption against the priesthood of the South. Micah said the priests taught for pay, which according to Smith in his Commentary on Micah, meant that they handed down legal decisions supposedly on the basis of Torah, but were actually influenced by bribery,³⁵ (Mic. 3:11).

Isaiah charged them with drunkenness (Isa. 28:7) so that they erred in vision and judgment. Jeremiah said the priests

³²W. R. Harper, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea, International Critical Commentary, Vol. 23 (New York: C. Scribner's Sons 1905), p. 254; citing T. K. Cheyne.

³³Ibid., p. 255.

³⁴Ibid., p. 258.

³⁵J. M. P. Smith, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel, by J.M.P. Smith, W. H. Ward, Julius A. Brewer, International Critical Commentary, Vol. 24 (New York: C. Scribner's Sons 1911), p. 80.

did not enquire of god and didn't know him even though they gave judgments on the basis of His laws (Jer. 2:8). They were wicked and profane (not set apart unto Yahweh); they were murderous (Jer. 23:11; Lam. 4:13). Ezekiel's main charge was that the priests had mishandled the law, not distinguishing between holy and common (Ezek. 22:26). The accusations against the priests were that they mishandled the Torah, pre-saging the problem of false teachers; that they were corrupt; and that they had incorporated Baalist practices in the Temple worship of Yahweh.

Prophets

The Hebrew does not have a word for false prophet. The Septuagint...translates $\chi'11$ where it is used of the prophetic opponent of the canonical prophet as $\psi\epsilon\upsilon\delta\omicron\pi\rho\omicron\phi\acute{\eta}\tau\eta\varsigma$. The context determines the idea of false prophets.³⁶

The genuine prophets speak of the other prophets in flaming denunciations. They prophesy lies (Jer. 23:25), they prophesy falsely (Jer. 5:31), and teach lies (Isa. 9:14-16). They prophesy from their own imaginations, out of deceitful hearts, false dreams, lying divinations, delusive visions (Jer. 14:16, Ezek. 13:1ff). They prophesy what the people want to hear (Isa. 30:10); peace and security when there is to

³⁶Charles E. Tilson, "False Prophets in the Old Testament" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, 1952), p. 46.

be retribution (Jer. 8:10, 11; 14-15); smooth things, and soft words (I Kings 22:13, Isa. 30:10, Jer. 6:14) when hard words were necessary (Jer. 28:8). They prophesied of peace to "ones who walked after the imagination of their own hearts" (Jer. 23:17), and to idolators (Ezek. 14:9, 10). Some had even prophesied "in baal" (Jer. 23:13). They sought to please the people because they "teach for hire" (Mic. 3:11); they prostituted their calling for the sake of support (Hos. 4:5)³⁷

Thus the prophets misled the people, allowing them to continue in evil ways (Jer. 23:22) unwarned. In so doing they "devoured souls" (Ezek. 22:25) with lies, they hindered the righteous and gave false security to the unrighteous (Ezek. 13:17ff). Many were drunken, immoral, corrupt, greedy and murderous (Ezek. 22:25; Amos 2:11, 12). However, there was interaction because they were the product of a corrupt society (Amos 2:11, 12).

Even though the standards for determining false prophets are listed in Deuteronomy, many of the false prophets were hard to distinguish from the true prophets, by persons contemporary with them.

Jeremiah pled with the prophets that they should tell when they experienced a dream, and not to say "thus saith the Lord" unless He had definitely spoken to them (Jer. 23:28).

³⁷Harper, Hosea, (International Critical Commentary), p. 258.

This highlights both the distinction, and the problem of identifying a true prophet from a false one "Fulfilment or non-fulfilment of the revelational Word"³⁸ was one criterion (Deut. 18:21). However, even a false prophet might predict accurately (Deut. 13:1-5), and not until Ahab was slain did it appear that Micaiah was right and the other prophets wrong. Further, a true prophet could predict something that might not come to pass, e.g., Jonah. A true prophet would never lead away from Yahweh, a false one might (Deut. 13:1-5). A false prophet would generally use dreams as a medium (Jer. 23:25-28 , 32, 27:9ff; 29:8ff). Yet, Zechariah had divine guidance through dreams (Zech. 1:9ff; 4:1ff), so dreams had to be tested. The prophet could be deceived in all sincerity: "Micaiah did not charge the four hundred prophets with insincerity; he believed that Yahweh himself had inspired them to utter in good faith a lie in order to destroy Ahab (I Kings 22:19-23)."³⁹

The content of a prophet's word was supposedly a safe guide. Soft words (I Kings 22:13; Isa. 30:10; Jer. 6:14) were probably false; hard words (Jer. 28:8) were likely to be

³⁸J.G.S.S. Thompson, Old Testament View of Revelation (Grand Rapids, W.B. Erdman's Publishing Company 1960), p. 62.

³⁹T. Henshaw, The Latter Prophets (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p. 66ff.

authentic.⁴⁰ However, a true prophet might prophesy peace and prosperity, usually against a backdrop of pleas for repentance (Jer. 29:11, Isa. 9:6; 40:11; Amos 9:11, Hos. 14:4). Outwardly there would seem to be little difference between a true and false prophet. Both claimed to speak in the name of Yahweh, but spoke from deep personal conviction. Both would appeal to an ecstatic experience as proof of genuineness. But both could not be right.

The true prophet had a tremendous sense of being in direct contact with Yahweh and of being dominated by Him.⁴¹ "The reception of the revelatory word affected the prophet powerfully."⁴² There was an "agony", a dynamism which authenticated the words of the true prophet (Jer. 23:11ff; Amos 3:8). The true prophet spoke because he had to (Amos. 3:8), not because he was a professional (Amos 7:14).

The true prophets of Israel were reformers preaching repentance or doom. They were not separationists, i.e., separating themselves from the evil people, but rather took their place in the midst of them to declare judgment. They prophesied of a remnant (Isa. 1:9, 10, 21; 11:11; Jer. 15:11, 23:3; 31:7; 44:28; Ezek. 6:8; Joel 2:32; Mic. 2:12), but did not seek to separate them from the bulk of the people. On the

⁴⁰Thompson, op. cit., p. 63.

⁴¹Henshaw, op. cit., p. 66f.

⁴²Thompson, op. cit., p. 63.

other hand, they were not compromisers, scorning smooth words where harsh and strong words were needed.

Shepherds

In this category lie the offices of the Kings, Judges, Elders, Priests, Princes and Prophets.

The prophets have a peculiar term for the leaders, viz., Shepherds. As such they inveigh against "false shepherds." (They denounce the rulers on other occasions, but this term is relevant to our study.) They are blind, ignorant, slothful, lack understanding, seek their own gain, drunken and falsely secure (Isa. 56:10-12). Shepherds are supposed to take care of the sheep, not themselves, yet these false shepherds did not feed the sheep, strengthen the diseased ones, heal the sick ones, bind up the broken ones, nor seek the ones who were driven away or lost. They exercised force and ruled with vigor (Ezek. 34:2ff). They drove away, scattered, and caused the sheep to go astray (Jer. 23:1,2; 50:6; Ezek. 34:2ff). Therefore, they would be removed from authority (Ezek. 34:10); they shall not prosper (Jer. 10:21); they shall be punished (Jer. 23:2).

The King is addressed as a shepherd (Jer. 13:20), as are the prophets (Jer. 23:4) and rulers (Isa. 44:28). The term is mainly applied to rulers but, as is evident, covers more than that. The effective use of this term was to condemn the spiritual and temporal leadership of Israel.

V. SUMMARY

In summary of the study of ancient Israel, the First Commonwealth, it may be said that the standard revealed to Moses was quickly forgotten. Syncretistic tendencies developed; reforms emphasized the cult and its cleansing, the external observance of Yahweh worship, and not the internal attitude of the heart. False gods were introduced and an attempt was made to blend the worship of Yahweh with the worship of the Canaanites - to worship Yahweh in pagan ways. Apparently the people were unaware of what they were doing because they had a false sense of security in the covenant, forgetting the exclusiveness of worship demanded by Yahweh. The false prophets did not denounce the practices of the people but compromised the word of God, either because of a spirit of concession or because they were self deluded. Many could be accused of immorality, drunkenness, murder and vice. Yet they had dreams and ecstatic experiences.

The true prophet was distinguished supremely by his consciousness of inter-relationship with Yahweh and the Word burning within him. The Word of God was so distinct from his own thoughts, dreams, or notions that he had to say "Thus saith the Lord!"⁴³ He spoke within the context of a sinful nation, not from without, and he did not seek to disassociate himself

⁴³Ibid., p. 62.

from the people of Israel although he did prophesy of a Remnant to be uniquely saved out of Israel.

The priests were also accused by the prophetic writers of turning away from truth. They, too, were accused of immorality and vice, of abetting the influx of pagan influence; and more than that, they had ignored Torah and teaching of the law, or had falsified it so that justice was hindered. Their handling of the law was affected by bribery and influence. They emphasized the cultic aspect more than the teaching of Torah and so were accused of ignorance of it. So the finding of the law in the Temple came as a great shock to the King and the people in the time of Josiah. Later, from the time of Ezra on, there was to arise a dichotomy between the priests of the cult and the priests and scribes who handled the Torah.

The religious picture of Ancient Israel was not unstructured but fragmented. The national religion oscillated with leadership and the people were caught between the exclusiveness of Yahweh and the tendency to give place to the agricultural god of fertility, seemingly so important to their existence. They were also involved in magic - the recognition of another power realm. The false prophets accepted the situation and offered security; the true prophets denounced the situation. The priests had largely become ignorant of Torah, and the leaders did not judge by it.

CHAPTER III

EARLY JUDAISM -- SYNCRETISTIC PATTERN CONTINUES

The period in history with which this chapter is concerned is not one about which there is much concrete evidence. The references and archeological detail are sparse. However, the view that Ezra and Nehemiah instituted a reform that endured cannot be supported by the available material.

Evidence points to a continuation of the tendency established in Judges of pursuing other gods and identifying with the religious practices of the culture in which the people lived. This study is segmented into the periods of Oriental and Hellenistic influence.

It is not known to what extent Judaism was affected by oriental thought while under Babylonian and Persian domination. That they were affected by contact with oriental thought (e.g., angelology) is a generally accepted fact, but the influence could have come during the Hellenistic period as much as during the time of Babylonian and Persian domination. No attempt is made to establish such an influence in any particular period. Merely to point out the syncretic difficulty suffices for this study.

I. ORIENTAL PERIOD

Fall of Jerusalem

The fall of Jerusalem was the second great national event in the Old Testament. The Exodus was the first, out of which came a nation. The exile produced Judaism. It was the great watershed in the history of the Israelite religion. The life of the people of Israel ended; the history of Judaism began.¹

Canaan was the holy land. Yahweh dwelt in Israel; but, with the exile, land, temple, and king were removed as evidence of God's presence, only the divine Word was left.²

The Torah was elevated to its old importance, but the pattern of oscillation due to leadership and the constant tendency to syncretism continued.

Post War Conditions

The towns of Judah were thoroughly devastated. "All or virtually all of the fortified towns in Judah had been razed to the ground",³ but Jewish settlements in the Negeb escaped destruction.⁴

¹Y. Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, translated and abridged by Moshe Greenburg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 447.

²Ibid., pp. 447, 449.

³W. F. Albright, The Biblical Period From Abraham to Ezra (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 86.

⁴Ibid., p. 81.

36

Josiah's reform had been extended into North Israel, affecting the transplanted tribes of the Assyrian conquest.⁵ However, the towns north of the old border of Judah were still under Babylonian control and therefore left untouched.⁶ There was a large Israelite population in Ephraim, Galilee and Transjordan.⁷ These were all Yahwists; nevertheless for the next century they "practised syncretistic rites which at best compromised seriously with the surrounding paganism."⁸ Some time before the middle of the fifth century Yahwists became hereditary governors of Samaria. The territory of Judah was divided between the Babylonian province of Samaria and Edomites (Idumeans) who settled in the hill country.⁹

The Return

When the Edict of Cyrus permitted the return of Exiles, one would have expected a rush to return, but this was not the case. For some, 60 years, for others, 50 years had passed and a new generation had grown up in a situation wherein they were guaranteed civil rights. Some did return. Albright

⁵J. Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 297:

⁶Albright, op. cit., p. 86.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 85.

⁹Ibid., p. 86.

estimates that by the time of Zerubabel 20,000 were there.¹⁰
Poverty and/or religious idealism helped them make the decision.¹¹

In spite of what has been called a Catharsis, the new community was anything but the prophetic ideal of a cleansed and purified Israel. The community was divided roughly into two segments: the one party composed mainly of the returnees conscious of religious purity, and the other party composed mainly of the native population whose Yahwism was no longer pure. Syncretism doubtless increased.¹²

Zechariah, speaking to the situation at hand, condemned idolatry, false visions and soothsaying "because there was no shepherd" (Zech. 10:2), i.e., no leadership. He prophesied of a future time when there would be no idolatry, a time when false prophets would not get a hearing, and would not make the pretense of being prophets (Zech. 13:2-5).¹³

The ideal for Israel and Judaism would be the admission of foreigners willing to obey the law (Isa. 56:1-8), and

¹⁰Albright, op. cit., The Biblical Period, p. 87.

¹¹P. Heinisch, History of the Old Testament (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1952), p. 325.

¹²J. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 350.

¹³On Post-Exilic character of These Passages see W.H. Lowe, "Zechariah," Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), V, 558-562.

38

Zechariah looked forward to that time (Zech. 2:11; 8:11ff), but there was also an awareness that separation was necessary in order that the community would not lose its own integrity through assimilation of foreign practices. Other leaders, therefore, called for separation from the native population (Hag. 2:10-14).¹⁴

Under the goad of the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, a separation was made. Only the returnees were allowed to rebuild the Temple to the discomfort of the Samaritans, who caused trouble by uniting with other syncretistic Yahwists to delay the building (Ezra 4:5). However, it was built and dedicated in 515.¹⁵ Hope diminished that a Davidic state would re-emerge, and for some sixty years normal relations existed between the older population and the returned exiles. The population probably doubled during that time. The time was ripe for another rise in the religious affairs of Palestine.¹⁶

Ezra and Nehemiah - Torah Enthroned

Two men dominated the scene of Palestinian Judaism in the fifth century. Ezra and Nehemiah saw the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt, the Temple cleansed, and the tiny nation reestablished

¹⁴J. Bright, op. cit., p. 350.

¹⁵P. Heinisch, History of the Old Testament, p. 330.

¹⁶Albright, The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra, p. 89.

on the Torah. They were Deuteronomists.¹⁷

The exiles in Babylon had had to face the problem of sacrifice which was forbidden outside Jerusalem. Their lives became oriented around the Torah, and so did the cultic practices, namely, synagogue, prayer, and the ceremonial reading of the law. With the return of Ezra from Babylon, these factors became prominent in Palestine.¹⁸

On the basis of the law, reform took place. First, there were ethical considerations, e.g., prohibition on usury and limitations of debt. Then came the purification of the Temple, the collection of tithes for the Levites, the enforcement of the Sabbath, and the prohibition of mixed intermarriage.¹⁹

There was a sectarian aspect about this that is important in relation to the subsequent sect development in Judaism. Smith points out the factors of synagogic non-sacrificial worship, the idea of covenant in Neh. 10, and separation as the basis for development of sects.²⁰

Finally, because of the Reforms, a rival worship of Yahweh was established in Mount Gerizim by a priest who was married

¹⁷M. Smith, "The Dead Sea Sect in relation to Ancient Judaism," New Testament Studies, 7 (1961), p. 352.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 351.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 352; and cf. Heinisch, History of the Old Testament, p. 33ff.

²⁰Smith, Ibid., p. 351ff.

to the daughter of Sanballat. He was Manasseh, grandson of Eliashib, therefore of Zadokite blood.²¹ Other priests similarly situated accompanied them. Sanballat built a Temple. The worship of the Samaritans was therefore oriented around this center rather than Jerusalem.²²

The conflict in the Book of Nehemiah was not between Jews and Gentiles but between the Deuteronomists and the popular cult of Yahweh "which no doubt perpetuated many characteristics of the syncretistic religion prevalent in Judea prior to the exile."²³ That the Deuteronomists recognized the syncretistic tendencies of the forefathers was apparent. The Law had been given by God on Mt. Sinai (Neh. 9:13-14). By the time of the Judges, Israel had disobeyed it (Neh. 9:26); against it kings, officials, priests, and common people had sinned (9:3,4).²⁴ The tendency to laxity was present even during the time of Nehemiah, for "when he went back to Persia, all the abuses which he had abolished quickly crept in again, so that on his return he had to go over the old ground again,"²⁵ i.e., marriage with foreigners (Neh. 13:23,24) and the Levites' portion being withheld (Neh. 13:10).

²¹Samuel J. Schultz, The Old Testament Speaks (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 277; and cf. Heinisch, op. cit., p. 342 for date.

²²Heinisch, Ibid.

²³Smith, op. cit., p. 355.

²⁴Heinisch, op. cit., p. 336.

²⁵W.H. Lowe, "Malachi," Ellicotts Commentary on the Whole Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), V, p. 598.

Malachi, a contemporary of Nehemiah, continued the prophetic diatribe against the priests, people, and false magicians. The priests were accused of slovenliness and formalism (Mal. 3:14), and evasion of the Law (Mal. 1:14). They allowed the use of improper sacrificial animals, etc. (Mal. 1:7-12) and regarded their duties as a burden (Mal. 1:13). They had ceased to give proper instruction in the Law (Mal. 2:8) and showed partiality in justice (2:9).²⁶ The people were cheating (Mal. 3:5), not paying tithes (Mal. 3:7-10), divorcing Israelite wives and marrying foreigners (Mal. 2:13-16), committing crimes contrary to the Law - adultery, perjury, oppression, affliction of widows and orphans (Mal. 3:5). Evidence was also present of the continuation of magical practices (Mal. 3:5).

It was a relatively small group which was affected by the reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra, and in the remaining years of Persian rule, although the evidence is scanty, it points again toward diversity.

In the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., Palestine belonged to the belt of an eclectic, Greco-Egyptian-Asiatic culture.²⁷ Painted Greek pottery, Phoenician amulets and

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Elias Bickerman, From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), p. 15.

Egyptian idols were equally typical of Palestine in the fourth century.²⁸ Coins were found with the inscription y h d "Judah." The "remarkable point was that the coins...were minted on the model of Attic drachmas, some with the image of Zeus, some with a picture of the Athenian owl."²⁹ Having received permission to mint their own coins and levy their own taxes,³⁰ why would the image of a foreign deity appear on Jewish coins? A picture appears of Jewish life after the Restoration, "...rather different from what is conveyed by the conventional cliches." It indicates "...that life was more vivid, more diversified than the rules of conduct as formulated in Scripture might suggest."³¹

Already the material culture of Jewish Palestine was saturated with Greek influence,³² portent of a new era.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Martin Noth, The History of Israel (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), p. 344.

³⁰W. F. Albright, Archaeology of Palestine (Baltimore: Pelican Books, 1961), p. 143.

³¹Bickerman, op. cit., p. 31.

³²W. F. Albright, The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra, p. 96.

II. THE HELLENISTIC ERA

Greek Influx

Alexander the Great's conquest of the Persian Empire caused a dizzying acceleration of the Hellenistic impact upon Western Asia.³³

Alexander's aim was to achieve a union of East and West under the aegis of Greek culture.³⁴ The effect upon Judaism was powerful.

The Jewish territory was practically in the midst of Hellenistic cities: Ascalon, Akko (Ptolemais), Joppa (Jaffa), Apollonia and others on the coast; Samaria, Scythopolis and Gadara in the north; Pella, Gerasa, Philadelphia (Rabbath-Amana) beyond the river Jordan; and Marisa in the south. Here the Jews came into contact with Greek men, institutions, arts.³⁵

The Jewish territory itself was crowded with Greek soldiers and commercials, according to the papyri.³⁶ Greek became the language of business and administration.³⁷ "The influence of a new, foreign and technologically superior civilization acted, as usual, as a powerful dissolvent which destroyed the traditional discipline of life."³⁸

The testimony of writers of the period validates the above statement. Hecataeus of Abdera (circa 290 B.C.) remarked,

³³J. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 400. ³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Bickerman, From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees, p. 58.

³⁶Ibid., p. 59. ³⁷Ibid. ³⁸Ibid., p. 60.

44

"Under the rule of nations during later times, namely of the Persians and Macedonians...the Jews greatly modified the traditions of their fathers."³⁹ The writer of the book of Jubilees inveighed against neglect of the commandments, sabbaths, and circumcision; he warned against associating with the pagans, eating with them, or intermarrying with them. He warned against idolatry⁴⁰ and astrology.⁴¹ Ben Sira "...speaks of the Jews who are ashamed of the Torah and its regulations, of ungodly men who have forsaken the Law of the Most High God."⁴²

Factors leading to internal strife can be seen in the Jewish authors of the period. The writer of Jubilees accepted the doctrine of angel mediatory activities; Ben Sira and Antigonus of Socho opposed the belief of a blissful future life. Ben Sira repeatedly stated there was no resurrection.⁴³ The last two men, therefore, have been called Proto-Sadducees.⁴⁴

³⁹W.O.E. Oesterley, "The Cult of Sabazios - A Study in Religious Syncretism," The Labyrinth, S. H. Hooke, editor (London: S.P.C.H., 1935), p. 122.

⁴⁰Bickerman, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴¹W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), p. 348; he points to Astrology as the principal target.

⁴²Bickerman, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴³Albright, op. cit., p. 350.

⁴⁴Ibid.

45

The contrast between them and the apocalyptic literature of Jubilees, Enoch, Tobit, presaged the struggle between Sadducees and Pharisees, or between "the more aristocratic conservatives ...and the representatives of the masses...."⁴⁵ However, this growing antagonism was overshadowed by the "conflict between Judaism as a whole and Greek paganism."⁴⁶

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

The boiling point was reached when Antiochus IV Epiphanes ascended the throne of the Seleucid empire.⁴⁷

In the hope of furthering the cultural unity of his people, he zealously fostered all things Hellenic. This included the worship of Zeus and other Greek gods...and also of himself as the visible manifestation of Zeus (his image appeared on coins in the likeness of Zeus, while the name Epiphanes means 'the god manifest').⁴⁸

High Priest Onias III, a man of the conservative group, was deposed by Antiochus IV through the connivings of his own brother, Joshua (known by the Greek name Jason),⁴⁹ who replaced him. Jason was in full accord with the policies of Antiochus IV, and an active Hellenising policy was introduced.⁵⁰

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 352.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 353.

⁴⁷Bright, A History of Israel, p. 402.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 403, (see footnote 34).

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Solomon Zeitlin, The Rise and Fall of the Judean State (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publishing Society of America, 1962); p. 463 footnote 78; and cf. Bright, Ibid., p. 404.

A gymnasium was built, and because sports were in the nude, many had surgery to hide circumcision. Young priests neglected their duties to participate.⁵¹ This was not merely a matter of athletic activity. Greek sports were related to the cult of Heracles (II Macc. 4:18-20) and other gods; therefore, participation in the games involved a degree of recognition of other gods.⁵²

Jason was replaced by Menelaus, who promised to accelerate Hellenization.⁵³ So in 167 B.C. the Temple became the Temple of Zeus. "The cult of Zeus Olympis introduced into the Temple in Jerusalem at the same time that the cult of Zeus Xenius was imposed on the Samaritans was actually liberal Judaism in a Hellenized form."⁵⁴

Maccabees and the Hasmonean Dynasty

Against this policy of Hellenization came the reform reaction, a revolt led by a unique family, the Maccabees. Beginning as guerilla warfare leaders, they became the administrative leaders, then the High Priests and developed into the Hasmonean dynasty. The revolt was successful so that under

⁵¹Zeitlin, Ibid., p. 81.

⁵²Bright, op. cit., p. 404; and Zeitlin, op. cit., p. 83.

⁵³Zeitlin, op. cit., p. 83.

⁵⁴W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity, p. 353.

Simon (143-135) B.C, the autonomy of Judaea and the purification of Jerusalem was attained.⁵⁵

However, even during the revolt it is recorded that the religious sentiments had syncretistic elements.

II Macc. 12:32-45 tells how after a battle Judas examined the bodies of all his own men who had been killed. He found that each was wearing 'an amulet of the idols of Jamnia' and the implication is that God had rightly punished such offenders by killing them.⁵⁶

The Hasmonaeans conducted a strong policy of military accession, and the conquered peoples were forcibly circumcised. Even the Hellenistic population were treated in this manner.⁵⁷ Galilee,⁵⁸ Idumea, the coast, and Transjordan (Perea) were conquered and their peoples circumcised.⁵⁹ Naturally, when these areas were again lost to the State of Judea, the conditions favorable to syncretism would still be present. At this same time the Samaritans were conquered, and the rival temple on Mt. Gerizim was destroyed.⁶⁰

In spite of the defeat of the extreme Hellenist party represented by Jason and Menelaus, Hellenism progressed under the

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Erwin R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period (New York: Pantheon, 1953-1965) Vol. XII, p. 59.

⁵⁷Leonard E. Elliott-Binns, Galilean Christianity (Chicago: A.R. Allenson, Inc., 1956), p. 19.

⁵⁸W. Forster, From the Exile to Christ (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 40.

⁵⁹Bickeman, From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees, p. 152.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 151.

Hasmonaeans themselves, the difference being that Hellenistic culture was incorporated into Judaism,⁶¹ rather than Judaism into Hellenism.

The Herods and the Romans⁶²

In 63 B.C. the Jews lost their independence to Rome and the Herods came to power. The Herods continued the policy of the Hasmonaeans because of "their strong Hellenistic sympathies."⁶³

Herod the Great began his reign in 36 B.C., and showed a desire to please both the Jews and pagans, but his interest in the Greek way of life predominated. Even when he built the Temple, he utilized some Greek architecture. He degraded the High Priest office, abolished the life tenure principle of the office, and appointed as he pleased. He made little use of the Sanhedrin and set up a royal council on Hellenistic lines, replacing the old hereditary aristocracy by a new aristocracy of service graded according to Hellenistic practice. He was known as "a patron of Hellenism". He appointed games and built temples in honor of Caesar, encouraging the Emperor Cult. He built a theatre at Jerusalem and a great amphitheatre on the plains. These things are all integral parts of Hellenistic

⁶¹Ibid., p. 156.

⁶²D. S. Russell, Between The Testaments (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1960), p. 35ff.

⁶³L. E. Elliott-Binns, Galilean Christianity, p. 20.

culture. The other Herods never had as much power as he had, but their sympathies lay mostly in the same direction. The Roman Procurators who ruled Judaea for the sixty years from 6 A.D. to 66 A.D. were not purveyors of Hellenization, but simply acted as military governors.

III. SUMMARY

The oscillation between purity and syncretism continued in the circles where leadership can be identified. Available evidence of the practices of the masses shows that the people were still inclined toward dangerous ambivalences in allegiance. There were exceptions however, when the issues were clear, as in the case of the cult introduced by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The ordinary people had to live among Greeks and have daily intercourse with them. This fact points to the probability that there was no absolute dogma or practice in Judaism.

Somewhere during this period the sects of Judaism proliferated so that by the time of the Christian era they were apparently quite numerous. Two of them, the Sadducees and Pharisees, wielded political influence.

This survey of the prehistory of the New Testament shows that from the beginning there was a continuous battle of truth with error.

CHAPTER IV

HELLENIZATION OF PALESTINE: THE CLIMATE OF SYNCRETISM

In Chapters II and III, a brief historical survey of tendencies to assimilate extraneous religious elements pointed to the possibility of a similar situation in the first century A.D. In this chapter the purpose is to show that, contrary to the view formerly held, Hellenization of Palestine did take place in varying degrees and forms. The purpose is not to present the claim that Judaism was assimilated into Hellenistic culture. The method used is to state different strands of evidence which alone might not be sufficient, but combined they strongly support the idea that Judaism of the first century was diversified, and had assimilated to varying degrees the Mediterranean world culture termed Hellenistic. Sometimes in the presentation of evidence, data are given from later centuries. Justification for the use of this data is that it contradicts the sources from which judgments regarding the form of Judaism have been made.

The presentation of this material is an attempt to set aside the false criterion by which judgment has been made regarding the progress of doctrine within the church, and to present the possibility of the presence of Hellenistic elements in the church at an early date as a result of being inherited from Judaism. The concept of Normative Judaism is examined

51

first, then various evidence is presented, with emphasis on Rabbinism and Archaeology.

I. "NORMATIVE JUDAISM"

The term "Normative Judaism," if not coined by G. F. Moore, became associated with him. He speaks of "the triumph of normative Judaism as it has been developed in the schools of Palestine and Babylonia."¹ And "In the second century," he asserts, "Pharisaism was completely triumphant both in establishing the authority of the traditional law and in making its eschatology Jewish orthodoxy."²

Acceptance of Moore's position caused scholars to make a distinction between Rabbinic and Apocalyptic Judaism; Palestinian or Semitic, and Diasporic, or Hellenistic Judaism; and between Legalism and Mysticism. So Schweitzer and Otto were able to produce studies showing that Jesus and Paul came from Apocalyptic Judaism and John came from a Hellenistic background. Montefiore placed Paul in Hellenistic Judaism rather than Rabbinical Judaism.³ Modern scholars have studied the New Testament

¹G. F. Moore, Judaism. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927-1930), I, 109.

²Ibid., p. 110.

³W. D. Davies, Christian Origins and Judaism. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962), p. 20.

following certain lines; i.e., Old Testament, Hellenism, Hellenistic Judaism, Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Judaism; but "the recognition has grown that the first-century milieu... was variegated and, above all complex"⁴ even though the approaches have provided insight.

"In particular has it become clear that the traditional convenient dichotomy between Judaism and Hellenism was largely false. In the fusions of the first century the boundaries between these are now seen to have been very fluid."⁵

The classic dichotomy probably arose because of our ignorance of the ancient common ground.⁶ Scholars now ask whether this contrast does not reflect the present differences between two bodies of source material (the Rabbinic and the Diasporic) rather than the ancient differences between those parts of Judaism which the sources describe.⁷

"With regard to Diasporic Judaism, there is no doubt of the Greek garment"⁸; therefore, in discussing Hellenization of Palestine, relationship with the Diaspora must be introduced, although the Diaspora per se will be dealt with later.

⁴W. D. Davies, Christian Origins and Judaism (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962), p. 20.

⁵W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls", p. 157.

⁶M. Smith, "Palestinian Judaism" Israel: Its Role in Civilization, Moshe Davis, editor (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1956), p. 68.

⁷Ibid., p. 68.

⁸Ibid., p. 67.

II. THE RABBINIC AND BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

The Rabbis have been considered the conservatives in Judaism. Any relationship they had with Greek culture would be an indication of the extent to which it had an impact on Palestine and on Judaism.

Saul Lieberman introduces his book, Greek in Jewish Palestine, by quoting Rabban Simeon (the son of Gamaliel the Patriarch) as follows: "There were a thousand young men in my father's house, five hundred of whom studied the law, while the other five hundred studied Greek wisdom."⁹ When one considers that Gamaliel II was the Nasi (Prince) of Judaism, who was the successor of Johanan Ben Zakkai, and that he came to power circa 80 A.D.,¹⁰ the existence of an officially recognized Academy of Greek Wisdom in Jewish Palestine is of great importance.

There was a demand for a Greek translation of the Scriptures. Translation of the Old Testament into Greek was a process possibly begun before Alexander's conquest of the

⁹S. Lieberman, Greek in Jewish Palestine (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1942), p. 1.

¹⁰M. Cohen, "The First Christian Century as Jewish History," The Bible in Modern Scholarship, J. P. Hyatt, editor, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 242.

54

Persians.¹¹ Fragments have been preserved giving evidence that the process was over a long period of time. "It was carried on in Palestine, by and for Palestinians, and by and for both Jews and Samaritans."¹² In that the Hebrew text is somewhat obscure in many parts, it is apparent that when a translator read an idea into the text it was an element of cultural adaptation, which proved to be Hellenistic.¹³ "The preachers used Greek translations of the Bible in their sermons"¹⁴ and Biblical events were elucidated by the Rabbis in the light of Greek sources.¹⁵ Such a usage of the Greek Bible indicates a cultural change -a penetration of Greek into Semitic Palestine.

Incidental to the subject of homiletics is the observation that Old Testament references in the Rabbinic literature do not necessarily show signs of Jewish tradition rather than Hellenistic influence. Rabbinic literature was mostly homiletic and legal, and because preachers and lawyers

¹¹M. Smith, "The Image of God", Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester, XL (March, 1958), p. 482. See note 2, re Clement of Alexandria quoting Aristobulus to this effect.

¹²Ibid. See also notes 3 and 4.

¹³Ibid., p. 473f.

¹⁴S. Lieberman, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 2.

had to use authoritative proof-texts for their own ideas, which may not have come from their sources, many texts were made to bear meanings by the user, unrelated to the author's ideas. M. Smith has labeled this factor "Hellenization in disguise."¹⁶

Further links between Palestine and the Mediterranean culture are provided in examination of the papyri discovered in Egypt. "Rabbinic literature has much in common with the non-literary papyri and the inscriptions."¹⁷ "Moreover the comparative study of these two kinds of popular monuments very often brings to light the similarity of certain economic and legal conditions in Palestine and Egypt."¹⁸ So, many passages in Rabbinic literature will be best understood in the light of the life in Egypt as reflected in the papyri.¹⁹

Wolfson, in discussing the extent to which Philo agrees with the Rabbis in use of oral tradition, establishes more evidence of intercourse between the Palestinian Rabbis and Hellenized Egypt. Although Philo predated the collection of Rabbinic literature,

"parallels to many of these unwritten traditions reflected in the writings of Philo are to be found in the collections of Palestinian

¹⁶M. Smith, The Image of God, p. 473ff.

¹⁷S. Lieberman, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁹Ibid.

traditions known as the Mishnah, the Midrash, and the Talmud."²⁰

However, there is no evidence that the knowledge of Philo reflected in the Talmud is directly derived from literature.²¹ Thus establishment of this relationship in Rabbinic and Philonic studies breaks another false barrier.

There is dispute as to the extent the Rabbis read Plato and other Greek philosophers and as to the influence of Greek philosophy on the Rabbinic mind. Certainly there was a point of contact in interest in ethics, especially with the Stoics.²² Nevertheless "Greek philosophic terms are absent from the entire ancient Rabbinic literature"²³ although the vocabulary of the Rabbis was enriched by an excess of one thousand Greek words.²⁴ Information was probably received by conversation with philosophers. Many Rabbis were well-traveled, and Alexandria supplied a constant source for Greek wisdom.²⁵

²⁰H. A. Wolfson, Philo (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), I, 90f. See on p. 91 discussion of the four-fold nature of the contacts between Philo and Palestinian Rabbis.

²¹Ibid., p. 91.

²²S. Lieberman, "How Much Greek in Palestine?" Biblical and Other Studies, A. Altmann, editor (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 124.

²³Ibid., p. 30.

²⁴M. Cohen, "First Christian Century as Jewish History," p. 249. He estimates over 2,000 words; and W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London, S.P.C.H., 1962), p. 5: "1,000 terms."

²⁵Lieberman, op. cit., p. 131.

The Rabbis were definitely interested in the legal world, and particularly the Oriental-Hellenistic law of the Mediterranean Basin.²⁶ They probably did not read Plato or the Pre-Socratic philosophers, but they were interested in "gentile legal studies and their methods of rhetoric."²⁷ Hillel's principles of interpretation were characteristically Hellenistic in concept and even in form,²⁸ so that the Rabbinic thought of the Mishnah had a Hellenistic framework.

The Rabbis of Palestine were familiar with the fashionable style of the civilized world of that time.²⁹ Rabbi Abbahu not only studied Greek himself but gave his daughters a Greek education.³⁰ Abbahu was head of the academy in Caesarea. This and the reference to Gamaliel's house as a place where he had young men studying Greek proves "that there were inherent factors favoring the spread of Greek culture among the Jewish masses. The middle class had before it a good example to imitate; they followed in the steps of their superiors."³¹

²⁶Ibid., p. 132f.

²⁷Ibid., p. 135, and cf. D. Daube "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," Hebrew Union College Annual, 22 (1949) pp. 239-264.

²⁸W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 356.

²⁹S. Lieberman, Greek in Palestine, p. 66.

³⁰Ibid., p. 23.

³¹Ibid., p. 27.

58

The Rabbis were closely related to the middle classes. "The Greek of the Palestine Rabbis is mainly the Greek of the middle class of men."³² Thus the Rabbis are to be placed in this context. "All Rabbinic literature displays a wide knowledge and thorough understanding of the gentile cultural world. This literature reflects but incidentally the actual life of the Jews in Palestine."³³ If the Rabbis were so interested in Greek culture, then the middle and working classes involved in daily commerce among Hellenized peoples would naturally imbibe deeply of Hellenistic culture. Therefore, the cultural effect of Hellenism in Palestine must be considered as deeper than one could infer from Rabbinic literature.³⁴

In discussing Rabbinic literature, it is appropriate to make a comment regarding the study of Jewish Mysticism in Talmudic and extra-Talmudic literature.

"Gershom Scholem's researches on Jewish mysticism in late antiquity have demonstrated again in wonderfully erudite and penetrating ways, how both Talmudic and extra-Talmudic literature point towards the existence of Hellenistic themes, motifs, and symbols deep within the circles of 'pious' Jews."³⁵

His research will be dealt with more fully later, but it is further evidence of the involvement of Rabbis in Hellenistic culture.

³²Loc. cit.

³³Ibid., p. 9.

³⁴Ibid., p. 9.

³⁵J. Neusner, "Judaism in Late Antiquity" Judaism, 15 (Spring, 1966), p. 232.

This area of Biblical Tradition forms one great strand of evidence.³⁶ It includes not only Bible translations and Rabbinnics, but apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works with their Greek translations, works of the sects (Greek texts were found at Qumran), Targumim, Prayers in Jewish and Samaritan and Magical sources, the Christian and Samaritan pseudepigrapha as well as other sources which show definite Hellenistic traces, not to mention the New Testament.³⁷

III. JEWISH GREEK LITERATURE

The second body of evidence "consists of the works written by Jews in the pagan literary tradition."³⁸

Two varieties are apparent, one in the tradition of profane literature, and the other in the form of pagan religious documents. Examples of the first are Josephus and Philo; examples of the second are the Sibylline Oracles.³⁹ The influence of both Jewish and Hellenistic backgrounds is evident.

IV. NON-JEWISH TESTIMONY

The third body of evidence is that of non-Jewish authors. References made to Jews and reminiscences of Jewish works in

³⁶M. Smith, "The Image of God," p. 484. ³⁷Ibid., p. 484.

³⁸Loc. cit.

³⁹Ibid., p. 485; see also Chapters IV, VII and VIII of this thesis in which the material is discussed.

pagan, Christian, and early Moslem material, particularly the works against the Jews, the heresiologists, Roman legal material, and other specialist works, show a non-traditional picture of Judaism.⁴⁰

V. ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology and papyri form the fourth body of evidence. Coins, pottery, ossuaries, sarcophagi, and art, give the archaeological evidence; the Dead Sea Scrolls and other literary works give the papyri evidence.⁴¹

The archaeological evidence has been wonderfully correlated by E. R. Goodenough,⁴² whose work cannot be ignored by scholars. "Informed opinions of ancient Judaism can never,

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 486. See Note 1, "The best single survey of this literature is still that in J. Juster, Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romaine (Paris, 1914) 1. 31-179;" and cf. E. Schürer, History of the Jewish People Div. I. Vol. 1, pp. 35-185; see also Chapters IV, V, VI and VIII of this thesis in which this testimony is examined.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 486.

⁴²Erwin R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period (New York: Pantheon, 1953-1965); Morton Smith, "Goodenough's 'Jewish Symbols' in Retrospect", Journal of Biblical Literature, 86 (1967), pp. 53-68. This is the most valuable review as it covers all the other reviews and related material; "The Image of God", Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester, 40 (1958), pp. 473-512; Cecil Roth, Review (Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period by Erwin R. Goodenough), Judaism, 3 (Spring, 1954), pp. 179-182; Jacob Neusner, Review (Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period, Vol. 9, 11: Symbolism in the Dura synagogue by Edwin R. Goodenough), Judaism 13 (Spring, 1964), pp. 242-246.

henceforth be the same as they were before he published."⁶¹⁴³
Most of the scholars, however, reject Goodenough's thesis
that there was a "Mystical Judaism," an entity contrary to the
"Normative Judaism" of the Rabbis.⁴⁴

The discussion of art should be understood in light of
the second commandment and especially of the Rabbinic pro-
hibition of images.⁴⁵

Funerary Evidence

The Jewish burial grounds have furnished proof of diversity
among Jews including the Rabbis - a diversity which included
Hellenistic features. "Beth She'arim was the most famous
burial ground of Rabbinic Judaism"⁴⁶ of the second to fourth
centuries. Its remains showed that it was freely adorned with
drawings; some even had statues carved in relief, which was
specifically prohibited.⁴⁷ Most of the inscriptions were
written in Greek,⁴⁸ and some of them contained such commonplaces

⁴³M. Smith, "Goodenough's 'Jewish Symbols' in Retrospect"
The Journal of Biblical Literature, 86 (1967), p. 66.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 65.

⁴⁵B. Cohen, "Art in Jewish Law," Judaism, 3 (Spring, 1956),
pp. 165-176.

⁴⁶M. Smith, "Palestinian Judaism," p. 68.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 69.

⁴⁸B. Cohen, op. cit., p. 168.

62

as, "Be of good cheer, no one is immortal" .⁴⁹ This was the necropolis of the Rabbis, and located in Palestine! "The second and third century catacombs of Rome show Victory crowning a youth, Fortuna pouring a libation, cupids, adolescent erotes, and so on."⁵⁰ That there was a difference in the theological outlook of various Jews in Rome was apparent in that "those who buried their dead in the Via Appia catacomb were more Romanized and apparently less rigid in their attitudes than were the other groups."⁵¹ A catacomb like the one in Rome was reported near Carthage.⁵²

The material related to the New Testament period showed that burials were simple. Tombs, ossuaries and lamps found in the tombs, and coins which came mainly from around Jerusalem, were the evidence. One third of the writing on the ossuaries was in Greek.⁵³ The art was mainly of vegetable

⁴⁹M. Smith, "Palestinian Judaism," p. 68; B. Maisler, Beth She'arim (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1950), 14 pp and 42 plates; and N. Avigat, "Excavations at Beth She'arim 1958," Israel Exploration Journal, 9 (1959), pp. 205-220.

⁵⁰M. Smith, "Image of God" p. 490; and cf. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, II, 4-66.

⁵¹H. J. Leon, "The Jews of Rome in the First Centuries of Christianity," The Teacher's Yoke: Studies in Memory of Henry Trentham, E. J. Vardaman and others, editors (Waco: Baylor University, 1964), p. 161.

⁵²Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, II, 63-68.

⁵³M. Smith, "Palestinian Judaism," p. 69.

and geometric decoration. Because the tombs date prior to A.D. 70, and, such elaborate tombs could have been afforded only by the rich, it doubtless represented the taste of the Sadducees and Herodians.⁵⁴ Goodenough posited the idea that simple designs were used because of the Pharisees, but this was because he accepted Moore's position regarding normative Judaism. So others have disagreed.⁵⁵ The evidence of burials from the second century on was the usage of more elaborate materials.

Synagogic Evidence

The synagogues which have been excavated have also provided striking evidence. "Babylonia, Greece and Palestine have all yielded their quota,"⁵⁶ however, archaeologists have worked mainly in the area of Palestine.

The Palestinian synagogues have yielded art which is not usually considered Jewish.

A "second or third century synagogue of Capernaum had over its main door an eagle, carved in high relief. Over the eagle was a frieze of six naked erotes carrying garlands.

⁵⁴Smith, "Images of God", p. 493; and cf. Smith, "Goodenough's Jewish Symbols' in Retrospect," p. 59.

⁵⁵Smith, "Goodenough's 'Jewish Symbols', p. 59 and cf. E. E. Unbach, "The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry in the Second and Third Centuries", Israel Exploration Journal, 9, (1959), pp. 149-165, 229-245; and B. Cohen, "The First Christian Century as Jewish History," p. 165 ff.

⁵⁶W. O. E. Oesterley, "The Cult of Sabazios," p. 122 f.

Inside was not only a frieze containing human, animal, and mythological figures, but also a pair of free-standing statues of lions, probably in front of the Torah shrine."⁵⁷

"The synagogue of Chorazin, of about the same date, had similar statues and a frieze showing vintage scenes of the sort traditionally associated with the cult of Dionysius."⁵⁸ Other Palestinian synagogues show similar carved decorations.⁵⁹

Dura-Europos has provided us with synagogic remains which had a full interior of frescoes representing Biblical scenes.⁶⁰ Goodenough tried to prove that they were not only representations, but allegorizations close to the spirit of what is known from Philo. Neusner, an outstanding scholar on Babylonian Jewry, agreed that the evidence supported Goodenough's view of Dura-Europos because there was little evidence of Rabbinic activity in Dura, although he discounts his own ability to criticize Goodenough's interpretation of art.⁶¹

The flooring of some of the synagogues also provided interesting clues. The fourth and fifth century synagogues of Palestine have offered several mosaic floors with various

⁵⁷Smith, "Image of God," p. 490; and Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, I, pp. 181-192.

⁵⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 490; Goodenough, op. cit., I, 193-199.

⁵⁹Goodenough, Ibid., I, 119-225.

⁶⁰Ibid., Vols. 9-11.

⁶¹Jacob Neusner, Review, (Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period, Vols. 9-11; Symbolism in the Dura-Synagogue by Erwin R. Goodenough) Judaism, 13 (Spring 1964), p. 243f.

designs. Apparently in the first half of the fourth century⁶⁵
Rabbi Abun "gave official permission to have mosaics re-
presenting living creatures introduced into synagogue
construction."⁶² However, it should be understood that one
Rabbi could not speak for all. Some of the floors had
astrological figurations which Sukenik compared with

"Philo's interpretation of the twelve stones
of the High Priest's breastplate...as symbols
of the twelve signs of the Zodiac; Josephus'
similar explanation (Wars V. 5, 8) of the
twelve loaves of bread in the Tabernacle and
piyyutim of Kalir and others which are based
on the twelve constellations (Mazzaloth)."⁶³

Some of the floor designs would be considered to be pictures of
Helios, the sun god, driving his chariot if the designs were
not found in a synagogue.⁶⁴

Magical Material

Other evidence closely related to the pattern on the
synagogue floor must be considered. There were "amazing
parallels between the synagogue floors and the magical amulets
on which the sun god frequently appears with the title Iao
(i.e. YHWH) and Sabaoth."⁶⁵ This enabled Dr. Goodenough to

⁶²W. F. Albright, Archaeology of Palestine, p. 172. Note
that he says this statement in the Jerusalem Talmud was "lost"
until 1931, maybe "censored" would be a better word.

⁶³E. L. Sukenik, Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece,
(London: British Academy, 1934), p. 66.

⁶⁴Goodenough's, Jewish Symbols, I, 239-262.

⁶⁵Smith, "Palestinian Judaism," p. 69.

make a strong case for his identification of Jewish sources in many sections of the magical papyri.⁶⁶ The case is strongly supported by new evidence. "Most recently M. Margoliot succeeded in piecing together the Sefer Ha Razim, which constitutes still another, but by no means terribly new or exciting example of a Jewish magical papyrus, this time in Hebrew...."⁶⁷ It contained prescriptions for making images and prayers to pagan deities, including Helios, who are conceived as gods subordinate to Yahweh.⁶⁸ So with regard to magical material Goodenough said:

In the ancient world, with its widespread devotion to signs, portents, amulets and charms, pagans and Christians alike regarded Jews as the leading exponents of magic, they respected its power, and in the Talmud itself have preserved a charm which was to be written on a bit of hyena skin and worn to protect oneself from the bite of a mad dog.⁶⁹

Indeed many magical inscriptions "stand as testimony to the lively interplay of genuinely Jewish and syncretistic magic."⁷⁰

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 69.

⁶⁷J. Neusner, "Judaism in Late Antiquity," p. 233.

⁶⁸Smith, "Goodenough's 'Jewish Symbols,' XII, p. 59.

⁶⁹Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, XII, p. 59.

⁷⁰Gershom Sholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1960), p. 92.

This correlation between synagogue floor designs and Jewish and pagan magical materials makes the case for Hellenization of Palestine very strong.

VI. SUMMARY

This evidence has been accumulated from Rabbinic and Biblical tradition, Jewish Greek literature, Non-Jewish Testimony and Archaeology. These four types of evidence have been cited as well as several scholars with their different approaches. Lieberman studied the Rabbinics and Greek; Goodenough studied archaeological remains and papyri from a Greek background (he had a poor understanding of Semitics according to Smith); Gershom Scholem's approach was from mystical tradition within "normative Judaism". Another scholar, A. J. Heschel, demonstrated that theological attitudes of the Jews in the area of transcendentalism and immanentalism should be seen in the light of theological inquiries among contemporary gentiles.⁷¹ With such a diversity of materials studied by scholars of different background and interests, Smith pointed to a uniform conclusion that

"....The Hellenistic period saw the development of a Judaism profoundly shaped by Graeco-Oriental thought, in which the mystical and magical...elements were very important. From this common background such elements were

⁷¹J. Neusner, "Judaism in Late Antiquity", p. 232.

derived independently by the magical papyri, gnosticism, Christianity and Hellenistic and Rabbinic Judaism."⁷²

The correlation of evidence presented makes this viewpoint imperative.

Neusner, in his criticism of Goodenough, made the statement that the mystic and rabbinic groups might be viewed as "modulations of Jewish Hellenism."⁷³ This provides a good way to look at Judaism. The emphasis should certainly be laid on diversity, correcting the idea of a monolithic Judaism that Rabbinic literature (a doubly censored source⁷⁴) has seemingly provided in the past.

⁷²M. Smith, "Observations on Hekhalot Rabbati," Biblical and Other Studies, A. Altmann, editor (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 153f.

⁷³Smith, Goodenough's 'Jewish Symbols,' p. 63. He quoted Neusner.

⁷⁴Smith, "Image of God," p. 487. External censorship by Christians, Domestic by the Jews.

CHAPTER V

JEWISH SECTARIANISM - MODULATIONS OF JEWISH HELLENISM

Having discussed the Hellenization of Judaism, attention is directed to an investigation of a peculiar Jewish element, the Jewish Sect.

There was such great diversity in the Palestinian scene that the "norm" before the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 should be considered as "that compromise of which the three principal elements are the Pentateuch, the Temple and the 'Amme ha'arez, the ordinary Jews who were not members of any sect."¹ The "norm" was not Pharisaism. The Pharisees, forerunners of the Rabbis, were a sect. The religion of the sects was influential, but not normative. The sects (the Pharisees and Sadducees are included in this consideration in spite of their political power) constituted pressure or fringe groups distinct from the 'amme ha' arez.

More can be said of the sects, although without complete accuracy, than of the religion of the masses. The main references to them are found in the Greek Historians, Rabbis, Patristics and the Dead Sea Scrolls. It has been suggested that the origin of the sects dates back to the covenant which

¹Morton Smith, "The Dead Sea Sect in Relation to Ancient Judaism," New Testament Studies, VII (July, 1961), p. 356.

the returned exiles made (Nehemiah 10), and the non-sacrificial synagogic worship introduced by Ezra. Therefore, a sect was a group bound by a covenant to maintain peculiar practices based on particular legal interpretations of the Torah (Pentateuch).² Further reason for exclusiveness was esoteric mysticism practiced by some of the groups. Regardless of how they arose, the sects were destined to play a major part in the life of Judaea.

I. THE FOUR MAIN SECTS

Josephus gives us the name of the four main "haireseis" or "philosophiai" (using terms understandable to the Hellenic world), viz., the Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots, and Essenes (Jos. 13:5, 9; 18:1, 2).

The Sadducees³

The Sadducees were the aristocrats. They were wealthy persons of rank who belonged mostly to the priesthood (although many priests were not Sadducees) and controlled the High Priesthood. In this fact the New Testament and Josephus are in agreement (Jos. 13:10, 6; Acts 5:17). As a result of their

²Ibid.

³C. Guignebert, The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, (New York: University Press, 1959), p. 162ff; and E. Schürer, The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1885), Div. II, Vol. 2, p. 29f; and J. R. Driver, The Judaeen Scrolls (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), pp. 76ff.

beliefs and position they were known for their worldliness. The Sadducees were conservatives in both religion and politics.⁴ They expressed their religious conservatism by denial of the resurrection, personal immortality, future life and retribution, the existence of angels or demons, and the supremacy of fate, preferring to accept freedom of will (Jos. Ant., 15:5, 9; B. J. 2:8, 14). They refused any additions to the Torah, and did not recognize oral tradition (Jos. 13:10, 6). Neither did they recognize any other book as sacred, according to Origen and Jerome (Orig. C. Cels. 1:49; Jer. Comm. in Mt. 20:31-2).

As political conservatives, the Sadducees looked with disfavor on forms of Messianism which might disturb the status quo (John 11:50).

The Sadducees lost their position when the Temple was destroyed and seemingly vanished from view.⁵ So the only evidence we have of their existence⁶ comes from their opponents. Even Josephus, having joined the Pharisees, was careful to advance the Pharisees in the eyes of the Romans.⁷

⁴Guignebert, Ibid.

⁵Schürer, op. cit., p. 36f.

⁶Guignebert, op. cit., p. 162.

⁷Morton Smith, "Palestinian Judaism," Israel: Its Role in Civilization, Moshe Davis, editor (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1956), pp. 67-91.

Pharisees

The group opposed to the Sadducees was the Pharisees. The Sadducees were strict constructionists, keeping the letter of the Written Law, whereas the Pharisees were the opposite.

Social background and economic conditions caused many disputes between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Priesthood and the Aristocracy had no difficulty in maintaining ritual purity because it was not necessary for them to enter the concourse and commerce of Jerusalem city life. The provincial people were not affected by the problem since many of the standards of purity were related to the Temple. The Pharisees, then, saw the necessity to adapt the law to the needs of the city dweller (the Jerusalemite).⁸

Within the Pharisees themselves there were two parties - first, the strict Shammaites, who were wealthy, with aristocratic mannerisms.⁹ It has been asserted that these were the ones whom Jesus opposed.¹⁰ The second party was the liberal, "gentle" Hillelites whose views gained ascendancy after the destruction of the Temple.¹¹

⁸L. Finkelstein, The Pharisees, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publishing Society of America, 1940), I, 101ff.

⁹Ibid., p. 82f.

¹⁰Asher Finkel, The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), p. 134.

¹¹R. J. Herford, The Pharisees (New York: Macmillan, 1924), p. 108f.

Because they were unable to amend the law, the Pharisees developed a system of interpretation. This was called Oral Tradition or Law, and was claimed to be as valid and sacred as the Written.¹² As a body of procedures and practices, it became known as halakha, which in the first century represented the application of the dynamic and liberalizing Oral Tradition to the exigencies of daily life.¹³ Halakha resulted from discussion and general assent within the Pharisees. It originated from the Scripture; it became law when accepted by the majority and was binding upon the populace.¹⁴ So it is to be understood that the Pharisees sought to make Halakha binding not only on themselves but on the populace, believing that it was necessary for the nation and that they were the competent authorities on the Law.¹⁵ They believed that rewards, merits and punishments in this world and the after life were determined by the measure of observance of the Law.¹⁶

¹²M. Cohen, "The First Christian Century as Jewish History," The Bible in Modern Scholarship, J. P. Hyatt, editor (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 231.

¹³Ibid., p. 238.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁵C. Guignebert, The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, p. 164.

¹⁶M. Cohen, "The First Christian Century as Jewish History," p. 232.

In addition to Halakha there arose a body of material, the Haggadah (Aggadah). Whereas Halakah was a consensus of opinion on legal matters, Haggadah was free speculation on many matters, including the Law, Legend and Esoteric doctrine. It is not systematized material, but a compilation of the Rabbinic speculations.¹⁷

The Pharisees were progressive in their religious beliefs. Josephus tells us that an integral part of Pharisaic belief was the resurrection (Bell. Judg. 2:8, 14; Ant. 18:1, 3, 4 and supported by the Mishnah San. 10:1).¹⁸ They believed in angels and spirits whereas the Sadducees did not (Acts 23:8). Their view as to determinism was different from that of the Sadducees and the Essenes. Josephus informs us that the Sadducees believed in human freedom, the Essenes believed in an absolute fate, and the Pharisees took a median position in which fate and the human will were mixed (Bell. Judg. 2:8-14, Ant. 13:5, 9, 18:5, 9). One may look with some suspicion at Josephus' idea that likens the Pharisees to the Stoics and the Essenes to the Pythagoreans (Ant. 15:10; Vita. 2, fin). However, if one removes the Greek covering, one can see that their doctrines

¹⁷Herford, The Pharisees, p. 147ff.

¹⁸E. Schürer, The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, p. 13.

resulted from different interpretations of the Old Testament.¹⁹

Essenes

The third group was the Essenes.²⁰ Much has been written relative to this sect because of close similarity to the Qumran Covenanters. Josephus, Philo, and Pliny have presented a picture of their life and beliefs.²¹

They were noted for their ascetic manner of living, some living a withdrawn monastic existence and others living in the various villages. They had strict rules of entrance. A novitiate was put on probation for a year before entrance, with another two years' probation before full membership. Marriage was held in light esteem, but not condemned (Bel. Jos. 2:8. 2). They had a community of possessions (Bel. Jos. 8:3). One passage in Josephus which is difficult to interpret, suggests that they either used a separate entrance or else sacrificed in a separate part of the Temple. They may have even sacrificed in a different building since they felt they

¹⁹Ibid., p. 148.

²⁰C. Guignebert, The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, p. 172f.; E. Schürer, Ibid., p. 189f.; Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 25f, and R. K. Harrison, The Dead Sea Scrolls. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 72f.

²¹Harrison, Ibid.

were more ritually pure than other people (Ant. 18:1, 5).
However, Philo said they did not sacrifice.²² They had a
priesthood and seemed to partake of a common meal together.

One peculiarity that Guignebert called "worship of the
sun"²³ was mentioned by Josephus. He said they prayed
traditional prayers at dawn as if to hasten the sun rise (Bel.
Jos. 2:8, 5). Philo mentions that the Therapeutae of Egypt
prayed at dawn for a "fine bright day, fine and bright in the
true sense of the heavenly daylight which they pray may fill
their minds."²⁴ Guignebert may have interpreted too much from
these instances, but his suggestions should be kept under con-
sideration.

The Essenes were very diligent in the study of the Torah,
and even more vigorous in their interpretations than were the
Sadducees or Pharisees. The Sabbath and purity rules were also
more stringently observed.²⁵ They also believed in rewards
for righteousness.²⁶ They believed in unalterable fate (Jos.
Ant. 13:5, 9) which was equated with absolute belief in pro-
vidence.²⁷

²²Black, op. cit., p. 39f.

²³Guignebert, op. cit., p. 187.

²⁴Harrison, op. cit., p. 85. ²⁵Ibid., p. 76.

²⁶Harrison, op. cit., p. 82.

²⁷E. Schürer, The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus
Christ, p. 702.

Josephus says that the Essenes had a doctrine of immortality of the soul, believing that the body was perishable and that the soul awaited release from the bondage of the body as from a prison, to escape into the ether (Bell Jnd. 8:11).

Hyppolytus, contrary to Josephus, stated that the Essenes believed in the resurrection of the body as well as the immortality of the soul.²⁸ Hyppolytus was a much later authority than Josephus; however, Josephus tried to present Judaism in a good light to the Graeco-Roman world, which throws some doubt upon his testimony.

Certain facts leads one to think that this was not only a legalistic group. The order was in possession of special books, and the preservation of them was the duty of the members. Further, apparently as a result of their study of the scriptures and purifications, some of them were able to make predictions that came true, of which Josephus gives examples.²⁹ Finally, Angelology was highly regarded because the novice was pledged to preserve the names of the angels.³⁰ From these observations, it is obvious that mysticism was prominent in this group.

²⁸Ibid., p. 85.

²⁹Schürer, op. cit., p. 204.

³⁰Ibid.

Zealots

The other group mentioned by Josephus was the Zealots. This was a group of nationalists.³¹ They were political revolutionaries who had much in common with the Pharisees and other pious Jews, but followed the policies of the Maccabees in the matter of civil disobedience. They were activists and apocalyptists. Their apocalyptic hopes led them to look for a contemporary messiah - a deliverer from the bondage of Rome.

Some scholars, like Herford, identify Apocalyptic literature with the Zealots.³² The Zealots, however, were distinguished mainly for their activism. Some of all parties probably associated with them. At least one of the prominent leaders of the movement was a Pharisee,³³ and many of the Pharisees joined with the revolutionaries at the destruction of the Temple.

II. BAPTIST NONCONFORMIST MOVEMENT

Justin's List of Sects

The early Church Fathers have provided us with lists of Jewish sects which supplement those already mentioned. These

³¹C. Guignebert, The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, p. 169; and W. R. Farmer, Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 239 pp.

³²R. T. Herford, The Pharisees, p. 186f.

³³Guignebert, op. cit., p. 170.

lists indicate that there was a Baptist Nonconformist movement in Palestine.

Justin, in his Dialogue with Trypho (80.4), listed as sects: Saddoukaioi and Genistai and Meristai and Galilaeans, and Hellenians and Pharisees Baptists. (Kai is missing between "Pharisees" and "Baptists"). Justin believed he was describing Jewish heretics, yet he seems to include Sadducees and Pharisees and exclude Essenes.³⁴ The answer to the first problem is probably that Saddoukaioi refers to the Zadokites, the priests of the Damascus document who considered themselves the true priesthood. They were related to Qumran Covenanters. The Karaites called themselves Saddoukim³⁵ and have been compared to the Samaritans and the Qumran Covenanters. Ephrem has connected the "Sadducees" with John the Baptist.³⁶ So Justin may be discussing a baptistic sect and not the aristocratic Sadducees.

In the second case, the fact that "and" is missing between Pharisees and Baptists probably means that reference was to a baptising pharisee sect,³⁷ especially as Trypho was likely to have

³⁴Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 40f; and M. Simon, "Les Sectes Juives d'apres les temoignages Patristiques" Studia Patristica I (1953), p. 526f.

³⁵Black, Ibid., p. 52; see further discussion later in this chapter of thesis.

³⁶Ibid., and cf. J. R. Driver, The Judean Scrolls, p. 76f.

³⁷Black, Ibid., p. 51.

sympathies with the Pharisees. The baptismal cult was very extensive in Judaism; even the Hillelites emphasized baptism more than circumcision.³⁸

The Galilaeans were probably the group out of which the Zealots arose rather than a Jewish Christian sect.³⁹

As for the other three groups in the list, "M. Simon has argued convincingly that Genistae and Meristae refer to dualistic sects and that the Hellenians are probably Hellenists" i.e., Jews who lived like Greeks.⁴⁰

Black's conclusion was that Justin was describing not innocuous tendencies but Jewish heretical or sectarian movements.⁴¹

Hegessipus List of Sects

Hegessipus, given as a source in Eusebius Early History iv. 22: 4, 7, and probably dated circa 170 A. D., after a lengthy description of the ascetic (Essene?) behavior of James the Just, tells us that

James was accustomed to discuss the significance of Jesus with the representatives of

³⁸Ibid., p. 51f; and David Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, (London: Athlone Press, 1956) p. 109f.

³⁹Black, Ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁰R. M. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity, p. 14; and M. Simon, "Sur deux heresies juives mentionnes par Justin Martyr," (Revue d' Histoire et de philosophie Religieuses,) XVIII (1938), p. 56-58

⁴¹Black, op. cit., p. 53.

seven Jewish sects: Essenes, Galileans, Hemerobaptists, Masbotheans (also baptizers), Samaritans, Sadducees and Pharisees.⁴²

Surprise may be expressed with the presence in the list of the Sadducees and Pharisees. Simon and Black agreed that Hegessipus was equating himself not with the Jewish, but with the Jewish Christian view-point⁴³ and conceived the list as "Jewish groups a travers une optique Chrétienne,"⁴⁴ So, Pharisees and Sadducees do fit into such a list.

The Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes are readily identified as the three major "philosophies" of Josephus, and the Galileans as a group related with the Zealots. The Samaritans constituted the schism dating back to the return from Babylon. This leaves the Hemerobaptists and the Masbotheans to investigate.

Other sources throw light on these two groups. Epiphanius said that according to the Hemerobaptists, man can only live if he bathes every day in water to wash and purify himself of all his faults (Panarion 17). The Masbotheans were also a Baptist sect,⁴⁵ a Transjordan group possibly traceable to Mandaism.⁴⁶ (Possibly the Masbotheans may be identified as a

⁴²Grant, op. cit., p. 14.

⁴³Black, op. cit., p. 53.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁵J. Thomas, Le Mouvement Baptiste en Palestine et Syria, (Gemblous, 1935), pp. 40-42.

⁴⁶J. Danielou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), p. 71.

Jewish Christian sect. Hegessipus lists the sects, and the heresies which sprung out of the sects, and Masbotheans are mentioned in both.]

Epiphanius' List of Sects

Epiphanius actually listed four Samaritan Sects: Gorothenes, Sabaeans, Essenes, Dositheans, and Seven Jewish Sects: Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Hemerobaptists, Ossenes, Nasarenes and Herodians.

The Samaritan groups were all similar. Epiphanius made the point that the Samaritan Essenes whom he listed agreed in most fundamentals with their Samaritan neighbors: the Dositheans, Sabaeans and Gorothenes. In spite of this, they disagreed with all of them and came to blows with the Gorothenes, while the latter were on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem over the subject of the dates of the festivals.⁴⁷ Calendar distinctions characterized sectarianism, so this account "has a ring of truth to it."⁴⁸ There was some discussion in Rabbinic literature of Samaritan proselytes, which is also evidence for the truth of the list.⁴⁹

As further indication of the nature of these sects, Epiphanius said of the Dositheans that they were stricter

⁴⁷Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 57.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 57.

⁴⁹Ibid.

ascetics than the Essenes. They were vegetarians, believed in the Resurrection,⁵⁰ and one group rejected marriage.

Of the Jewish sects listed, the Herodians may be recognized from the gospels and also the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. The reference to the Hemerobaptists duplicated that in Justin's list and has already been discussed. The Ossenes were placed by Epiphanius in Transjordan and Thomas identified them as Essenes.⁵¹ This leaves the Nasarenes.

The Nasarenes were carefully distinguished from the Jewish Christian sect of the Nazorenes by Epiphanius. This led Black to consider that other scholars are intemperate who consider Epiphanius as having created the Nasarenes from his Jewish Christian Sect of the Nazorenes.⁵² Epiphanius characterized the Nasarenes as rejecting beliefs in fate and astrology. He alleged that they rejected animal sacrifice and the eating of meat and had a variant form of the Jewish Pentateuch.⁵³ These facts were set in contradistinction to the Jewish Christian Nazorenes described by him. The Nasarenes were placed by Epiphanius in the locale of ancient Gilead and Bashan. Elder Pliny (H. N. V. 19) makes the statement that there was a tetrarchy of Nazarini in Coele-Syria, giving a possible idea of the size of the group. One scholar

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 58.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 57.

⁵²Ibid., p. 66ff.

⁵³Ibid.

studied a Mandaean text and traced Mandaean origins to the emigration of a Jewish sect of Nazoraeans about the year A.D. 37 (the text mentions 60,000 as the number), obviously baptizing sectarians.⁵⁴ From this it may be that the Nasarenes could be shown to have been adherents of a Baptism of John⁵⁵ or at least as being in close relationship to it.

Synthesis: Clue to Widespread Movement

From the notices of Justin, Hegessipus, Epiphanius in particular, other heresiologists and the patristic researches of Brandt and other scholars before him, J. Thomas developed the concept of a widespread Jewish "mouvement baptiste" in Palestine and Syria before A.D. 70.⁵⁶ "It was a movement of baptizing non-conformity in opposition and conflict with the Pharisaic authorities at Jerusalem, displacing sacrifice by baptizing rites."⁵⁷ This sectarian movement "continued for centuries in the sects of the Jordan valley, all of whom were Jewish."⁵⁸ Thomas said that no evident trace of pagan "baptists" has been found in the country of Syria; the Jewish world had

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 68, re. Dr. Rudolf Mucuch; and cf. Lady E. Drower, "Adam and the Elkasites," Studia Patristica, IV (1961), 406ff.

⁵⁵Black, Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 54.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸S. P. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 11.

the monopoly of this new kind of religious formation.⁵⁹

So he concluded that "a sectarian movement existed in pockets or splinter groups from Samaria to Judaea consisting of sects among the Samaritans: Dositheans, Sabaeans, Gorothenes of Essenes, in Samaria as well as Judaea; Nasarenes; Masbothaeans, etc."⁶⁰

Dead Sea Scrolls: Supporting Evidence

The Dead Sea Scrolls have provided striking evidence of Thomas' viewpoint.

First, the most peculiar element of Samaritan religion⁶¹ was its distinctive recension of the Pentateuch - the only one the majority were prepared to accept. A Samaritan recension of the Book of Exodus was discovered in Cave 4. It definitely contains all the distinctive features of the full Samaritan Pentateuch. It was not in Samaritan, but in an old Hebrew script.⁶² This should be compared with Epiphanius' report

⁵⁹J. Thomas, Le Mouvement Baptiste en Palestine et Syrie, p. 436. See following chapter of thesis in which note is made of the presence of one pagan sect in Syria.

⁶⁰Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 55; and cf. J. Delome, "The Practice of Baptism in Judaism at the Beginning of the Christian Era," Baptism in the New Testament, A. George et. al. (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964), pp. 25-62; See p. 33, on which he says that Thomas is the real authority on Jewish baptistsectarians.

⁶¹On Samaritan Studies see, J. Bowman, "The Importance of Samaritan Researches" The Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society, I (1958-1959), pp. 43-55.

⁶²M. Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origin, p. 59; and cf. P. Skehan "Exodus in the Samaritan Recension from Qumran," Journal of Biblical Literature, 74 (1955), pp. 182ff.

that the Nasaraeans and the Ossenes held that the Jewish form of the Pentateuch was a later fabrication and that they held the true law.

Likewise, a striking similarity has been seen between the Qumran calendar and that of the Samaritans - one which differed from that of the Pharisees. The Qumran Covenanters were also ascetics, baptistic or at least stressed lustrations, and disapproved of the present administration of the Temple at Jerusalem.⁶³

Further evidence in the relation of the Samaritans and Qumran Covenanters may be seen in the especially close identification with the Dositheans. The Dositheans "show clear affinities with the Essenes and with the Covenanters both in doctrine and in practice."⁶⁴ Recognizing a Founder as "Messiah" the "star out of Jacob" and the only Teacher; and expecting a speedy resurrection of the dead, they also had Calendrical similarities, were strict sabbatarians and vegetarians, covered their bodies during ablutions, and at least some of them abstained from marriage.⁶⁵

The Dositheans were definitely connected with the Sadducees by ancient writers (probably referring to Sadducaeans or

⁶³Black, Ibid., p. 60.

⁶⁴J. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, p. 79.

⁶⁵Ibid., and cf. R. North, "The Qumran Covenanters", Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 17 (April, 1955), p. 184ff; see especially Note 82.

Zadokites).⁶⁶ Origen placed Dositheus, the Founder, about⁸⁷ the time of John the Baptist and stated that he gave out to be the Messiah, winning many adherents. Jerome declared he was the leader of the Samaritans and that the Sadducaei (Jerome was thinking of the Sadducees) originated from him. However, he distinguishes between two groups of Sadducaei,⁶⁷ those who believe and those who do not believe in the resurrection, spirits, and angels.⁶⁸ Filaster mentions that he was the teacher of Zaddok.⁶⁹ "The Samaritan chronicler 'Abu-'Ifath in the 14th century A.D. identified the Dositheans with the 'Sadducaean' and regarded them as heretical."⁷⁰

The purpose of this material is not to make absolute identifications but to show the similarities between these various groups and establish points of contact so that the points made by Black may be seen to be very acceptable, viz., that there was a widespread movement of Jewish sectarian non-conformity, baptizing ascetics with a different canon of scripture and different customs from the Pharisees.⁷¹

⁶⁶Driver, op. cit.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 260.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 79.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 79f.

⁷¹M. Black, The Scrolls and the Christian Origins, p. 74.

III. QUMRAN COVENANTERS

Archaeology has provided a point of contact with these sects in discovering the material of a sect near the Dead Sea who have been named the "Qumran Covenanters." These have been and are the subject of considerable scholarly debate since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in caves proximate to the Qumran buildings.

They have been identified with the Zealots (Driver) the Essenes (De Vaux, Black, Daniélou and others) the Sadducees (North) John the Baptist (Brownlee), and Jesus (Potter). The second definition has gained the most acceptance, the last two, the least acceptance.

The Scrolls have been assigned to various periods. Zeitlin maintains that they are medieval; Driver maintains that they are contemporary with the New Testament, but the majority of scholars agree that they pre-date the New Testament, a view which archaeology supports.

In our consideration we do not need to make positive identifications, but merely to gain insights into parallels. The first factor is that "here at last we are able to put our fingers upon a Jewish group in Palestine among which the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha were cultivated."⁷² Scroll finds

⁷²H. L. Ginsberg, "The Dead Sea Manuscript Finds: New Light on Eretz Yisrael in the Graeco-Roman Period", Israel: Its Role in Civilization, Moshe Davis, editor (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1956), p. 49.

included Deuterocanonical, Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings already known and some distinctive apocalyptic and sectarian works not known hitherto.⁷³

The second factor is the peculiar practices of the Covenanters. This was a group based on a covenant and strict rules. Probation was required before acceptance.⁷⁴ They practiced water purification. Baptism was not an initiation but was reserved for ones in the covenant: it did not effect, but required sanctity as a prerequisite. The Manual of Discipline decreed an annual examination. The community called itself a "Community in the Torah," thus accenting one of the major emphases as the study of the Torah. Priests were present and prominent in the community. The community "had all things in common" although there may be a case for some allowance for private funds. There was a common meal blessed by a priest which may or may not have had sacerdotal implications.⁷⁵

Purity was emphasized in a peculiar manner. The community obviously was considered pure and any impurity in a member would endanger that purity. However "purity" may have been a separate entity distinct from the Torah, the bread, the drink,

⁷³William S. La Sor, Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), p. 38ff.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 67.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 78ff; see p. 90.

etc. It was necessary to enter into water to touch the "purity."⁷⁶

Finally, in their beliefs, the Qumran people were monotheists whose theology of God was orthodox. They shared a reverence for the name of God in the Jewish manner that led to an emphasis on Transcendence.⁷⁷ He was the majestic Creator of the world. There was no mythological creation story. The universe was ordered, and followed God's laws. However, order applied to man as well, and God acted in history. There was an underlying idea of divine predestination of the course of the world and of history. The Apocalyptic literature had a more or less deterministic view of the course of the world. The Qumran community undertook the most consistent presentation of the world plan of God predicting the end of the age and the coming age. They considered themselves to be living in the last days and that there would be a final eschatological war between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness in which they were to take part along with the angels.⁷⁸ Angels in Qumran seemed to be "God's heavenly court rather than actual intermediary beings."⁷⁹

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 88.

⁷⁷Helmar Ringgren, The Faith of Qumran, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 48ff. The following paragraph in the thesis was based upon these pages.

⁷⁸J. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, p. 168ff.

⁷⁹Ringgren, op. cit., p. 82.

Messianic hope in the Qumran community probably involved two Messiahs, the one a priest and the other a king subordinate to the first,⁸⁰ a concept which can be demonstrated from other areas of Judaism.⁸¹

A modified dualism was in evidence in this doctrine, dualism under the control of a basic monism. God created two spirits, one of truth and the other of perversion; thus there were two ways in the world as a result of their activities.⁸² The dualism was not physical-cosmological as between spirit and matter, but on more of a religious-ethical basis.⁸³

In addition to apocalyptic outlook, which in itself was esoteric, there was a trace of evidence of mysticism in the idea of *ḥāz* (mystery). God's plan for the universe and history and the end of time required insight for His plans to be interpreted. The Founder of Qumran - the Teacher - received this revelation which was now passed on to the initiated that they might subordinate themselves to God's plan and times.⁸⁴

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 181.

⁸¹W. S. La Sor, Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith, p. 151ff; e.g. Test of the Patriarchs and Rabbi Johanan Ben Zakkai.

⁸²Ibid., p. 95ff.

⁸³Ringgren, op. cit., p. 70; and J. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, p. 550f.

⁸⁴Ringgren, Ibid., p. 60.

In this respect calendar studies and astronomy were important to determine festivals (part of God's times), and the Qumran calendar differed from that of the Rabbis.⁸⁵

This group, virtually identified as to time and place, has provided scholars with a fulcrum to understand more about the Jewish situation at the turn of the Era.

In addition to the similarity between the Samaritan sects and the Qumran community,⁸⁶ comparison has been made with the Karaites, which came to prominence in the ninth century.⁸⁷ In terminology and concepts (e.g. Two Messiahs)⁸⁸ and interpretation of Torah there were several curious affinities between the Qumran dwellers, the Samaritans, and the Karaites.⁸⁹ In view of the fact that Karaism swept through Judaism in the early days of the movement, this is possible evidence of an underlying non-Rabbinic force in Jewish religious life.⁹⁰

⁸⁵La Sor, op. cit., p. 129ff.

⁸⁶See further J. Bowman, "Contact Between Samaritan Sects and Qumran?" Vetus Testamentum 7 (1957), pp. 184-189.

⁸⁷N. Weider, The Judaeen Scrolls and Karaism, (London: East and West Library, 1962), 296 pp.
Also Ringgren, The Faith of Qumran, p. 253, for good bibliography.

⁸⁸Ringgren, Ibid., p. 253f.

⁸⁹T. H. Gaster, "Samaritans," Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon 1962), IV, 993.

⁹⁰Kaufman Kohler, "Karaites," Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk & Wagnalls C., 1902), p. 441.

93

Karaites in the Crimea asserted that they were descendants of the ten lost tribes and had settled there in the sixth century B.C. A. Firkovitch travelled through the Jewish settlements to accumulate documentary proof and in consequence of his "discoveries" (some forgeries were proved) a controversy arose, "but modern Masoretic studies by Paul Kahle and others tend to support them, with reservations."⁹¹

Another identification has been attempted with the modern Iranian gnostic group called the Mandaeans. There were strong similarities in lustrations and immersions, the conflict between good and bad angels, lack of sacrificing, and to Essenes the similarity extended to the use of white vestments and the doctrine of soul imprisonment in the flesh.⁹² However, there were differences in the attitude to marriage and the effect of water in the baptism. Many scholars are positing an early date for some Mandaean materials and a western Palestinian origin for the sect.⁹³

⁹¹A. I. Katsh, "Karaism," Encyclopedia Britannica (Chicago: William Benton, 1965), XIII, p. 261.

⁹²F. M. Braum, "Le Mandéisme et la Secte Essénienne de Qumran," L'Ancien Testament et l'orient, (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1957), p. 193. Cited by Edwin M. Yamauchi, "The Present Status of Mandaean Studies," The Journal of Near Eastern Studies 25 (April, 1966), p. 92f.

⁹³La Sor, Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith, p. 204; and Erwin M. Yamauchi, "The Present Status of Mandaean Studies" Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 25 (April, 1966) pp. 88-96.

The implications of Mandaean parallels with Qumran are seen as one of the cords binding sectarianism to gnosticism, to be unfolded in the next phase of study.

IV. SUMMARY

The baptizing nonconformist movement and the Qumran Covenanters are probably to be set alongside the Essenes in contemplating the Jewish scene of the first century of the Christian era. The Sadducees should not be set off from the other groups in that there were similarities between them and the Samaritans and Qumran dwellers.

They represented modulations of Judaism which contained legalistic and mystical elements and varying degrees of Hellenistic features.

The danger in the History of Religion approach is to ignore differences, but it was apparent that there was a widespread sectarianism in Palestine. Each sect preserved its identity, but was curiously identical to others in many features.

Three of the major sects, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots, were politically oriented and sought to control or sway the people in religious practice and law. The Essenes and their kindred sects were mainly concerned with the pursuit of religion in a more world-renouncing sense. A kaleidoscopic picture of Jewish life is opened up. In addition to the recognition of the impact of Hellenization, the Jewish sect is

seen as an element on the edge of normative Judaism, influencing the 'amme ha 'Aretz, the common people (this applied as much to Sadducees and Pharisees as the other groups in the first century once the confines of Jerusalem were left). This study of sectarianism is made important by virtue of the early notices as to the origin of Gnosticism.

CHAPTER VI

JUDAISM AND GNOSIS: THE ORIGINS OF GNOSTIC SYNCRETISM

The recent discoveries of gnostic materials at Nag Hammadi have emphasized that the church fathers were quite accurate in their discussion of gnosticism. This has reopened the question of gnosticism resulting in more weight being given to the testimony of the fathers as to its origins. More and more the Jewish element is receiving emphasis so that in many segments of early church research, there are major scholars tracing Jewish-Gnostic beginnings. Admittedly, in each field there are scholars who oppose such an emphasis, but the testimony gains credence when all the various evidence is placed side by side.

I. EVIDENCE OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Hegesippus was quoted by Eusebius to the effect that when Symeon was appointed bishop in James' stead after his martyrdom (circ. 62 A.D.):

they called the church a virgin, for it was not yet corrupted by vain discourses. But Thebuthis, because he was not made bishop, began to corrupt it. He also was sprung from the seven sects among the people like Simon, from whom came the Simonians, and Cleobius, from whom came the Cleobians, and Dositheus, from whom came the Dositheans, and Gorthæus, from whom came the Goratheni, and Masbotheus, from whom came the Mesbotheans. From them sprang

the Menandrianists, and Marcionists and Carpocratians, and Valentinians, and Basilidians, and Saturnilians. Each introduced privately and separately his own peculiar opinion. From them came false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, who divided the unity of the Church by corrupt doctrines uttered against God and against his Christ (Eus. 4:22. 4, 5).

Some of the names given are untraceable, but notice the affirmation that the heretics who were named, came from the "seven Jewish sects," and that there was a genealogy of gnostic sects derived therefrom, i.e., Syrian and Egyptian sects. Two names are identifiable and these received much attention from the heresiologists, viz., Dositheus and Simon.

Dositheus was connected by Epiphanius with the heresies originating from the Samaritans and was considered by him to be one of the founders of Jewish sects.¹ Origen (Contra Celsus 1.57) proffered the information that Dositheus considered himself the "true prophet" of Deut. 18:18, a verse which is highly esteemed among the Qumran Covenanters (4 Q Testimonia). Origen also said he was an ascetic (Contr. Cels. VI, 11) and kept the Sabbath (Princ. IV, 3:2).² The Clementine Recognitions (I, 54) identified Dositheus as a Sadducee;³ but as comparison

¹Jean Danielou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), p. 71.

²Ibid., p. 72ff.

³Ibid., p. 71.

has already been made between Sadducees (Zadokites), Samaritans, and Qumran Covenanters, this identification forms no obstacle but rather illuminates. He "seems to present a Samaritan Messianism combined with ascetic ideas, a sort of Samaritan Essenism."⁴ However, the testimony is somewhat obscured by the fact that a Dositheus was assigned to the fifth century B.C. and the Fathers knew of one contemporary with John the Baptist and Simon Magus. This problem is abated somewhat by the fact that "Abu'l Fath, the Samaritan historian, mentioned thirteen Samaritan sects"⁵ and distinguished between these two Dositheus'.⁶ There was a tradition of a Samaritan Dositheus, founder of a gnostic sect and associated with Simon Magus, which has been accepted as true by some scholars.⁷

Simon Magus provides a much stronger link with gnosticism. In Acts (8:9ff), information as to his position before becoming a believer is given; he was a sorcerer and he was known as the great Power of God. He was amazed at the miracles performed first by Philip and later by Peter and John, and tried to buy

⁴Ibid., p. 72.

⁵John Bowman, "Contact Between Samaritan Sects and Qumran?" Vetus Testamentum, VII (1957), pp. 184-189.

⁶Ibid., p. 185. See discussion related to the identification or distinguishment of the two sects.

⁷Jean Doresse, The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics (New York: Viking Press, 1960), p. 189, Note 74.

the same power, upon which Peter commanded him to repent and said his heart was not right. Simon's reply was that of fearful request for Peter's prayers on his behalf. This is the end of the New Testament observation, but this same Simon was then identified as the "Father of Heresy" by the Fathers.

The earliest and most authoritative sources on heresy agree on Simon's position. Justin, himself from Samaria, said (Apol. I 26) that there were

"certain men who said they were gods...(and) ...one of them was Simon, a Samaritan of the village of Gitto, who in the reign of Claudius Caesar performed in your imperial city some mighty acts of magic....

"And nearly all the Samaritans and a few even of other nations worship him as the first god. And there went around with him at that time a certain Helene who had formerly been a prostitute in Tyre of Phoenicia; and her they call the first idea that proceeded from him."

Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. I.23) linked Simon the Samaritan with Simon of Acts, adding that Simon taught he had appeared among the Jews as the Son, among the Samaritans as the Father, and as the Holy Spirit among other nations. Hippolytus repeated much that Irenaeus gave us, but added material related to 'Η Μεγάλη Ἀποφασίς.⁸ Similarly, Epiphanius, Origen, Theodoret,

⁸Robert P. Casey, "Simon Magus," The Beginnings of Christianity, F. J. F. Jackson and K. Lake, editors, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), p. 159.

etc. have identified Simon Magus as the Father of heresy.⁹

Modern research in the Patristics regarding Simon have shown that such a study is not fruitless. L. Cerfaux has sifted the evidence in studying the Simonian system; he found in the later versions traces of Valentinian and Basilidian influence and that there was a point of transition in which the system changed from one primarily of myths and magic to a gnostic system.¹⁰ E. Haenchen also produced a study on Simon in which he sought to prove that Simon was a gnostic even before he came in contact with Christianity.¹¹ These scholars have demonstrated that the evidence of the fathers cannot be ignored.

If the church fathers are taken seriously, "one thing is clear,...that the first Christian heresies were on the borderline between heterodox Judaism and Christianity."¹² Hegessipus traced a geneology from Simon, etc. to Basilides, Saturnil, Menander, Carpocrates and Valentinus. So also Irenaeus (Adv.

⁹See notes by A. C. McGiffert on Eusebius, II: 13 in Vol. 1, The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, P. Schaff and H. Wace, editors. (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1890).

¹⁰R. McL. Wilson, "Some Recent Studies in Gnosticism" New Testament Studies, 6 (1959), pp. 32-44; see notes on p. 38.

¹¹Ibid., p. 38.

¹²J. Danielou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity, p. 73.

Haer I, 23] stated "Menander, also a Samaritan by birth,"¹⁰¹ was the successor to Simon; and (Adv. Haer I, 24] "arising among these men" were two other gnostic doctors Saturninus (Satornilus) and Basilides, the first in Syria and the other in Alexandria. Justin said that Menander was a disciple of Simon and that he went to Antioch (Justin Apol I. 26). In Eusebius' comment on this passage, he called them sorcerers, who assumed the name of Christians (Eus. III. 26.4); he further remarked on their despising of the Christian doctrine of immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead. Saturninus showed encratite tendencies, a link with Jewish sectarianism, and Basilides was the means of transplanting Simonian gnosis from Antioch to Alexandria.¹³ Irenaeus further traced the geneology when he mentions that

a certain Cerdon (Cerdo), who had taken his system from the followers of Simon taught that the god proclaimed by the law and the prophets was not the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the former was known, but the latter unknown; the former was just, but the latter good. Marcion of Pontius succeeded Cerdon and developed his doctrine, uttering shameless blasphemies.

This ends the geneology of heresy which is definitely linked by the early church writers.

Carpocratians and Valentinians were mentioned by Hegessippus as derived from the Jewish sects, but no relationship was

¹³Ibid., pp. 74-76.

established with any of the great founding doctors. However, that Carpocrates had Jewish elements in his background is seen in his emphasis on the world-creating angels who were inferior to the uncreated Father (Irenaeus Adv. Haer. 1. 25:1). His system does not seem to have been related to the Samaritan-Syrian gnosis but "his gnosticism is strictly Jewish."¹⁴ Valentinus' system is one of the most sophisticated and shows more philosophical structure than the earlier systems and less dependence upon myth.

The Nicolaitans were supposed to have developed from Nicolas the Proselyte, one of the seven deacons appointed in Acts 6 (Iren. I. 26:3). However, Clement of Alexandria (Stromata III. 4) gave good evidence that the sect's appeal to Nicolas as authority arose out of an occasion when the Deacon, having been accused of jealousy, led his very beautiful wife into the group of the Apostles and gave permission for anyone to marry her. By so doing he was giving evidence that he was not jealous and his doctrine of self-control or abuse of the flesh was vindicated. The sect misappropriated this gesture as an avenue to licentiousness. Nicolas himself was reported as having lived with his wife and no other woman.

Cerinthus was considered to have been Jewish in his training and sympathies, while at the same time possessing

¹⁴Ibid., p. 85.

103

gnostic tendencies.¹⁵ Epiphanius (Haer 28) records that he was one of the Judaizers who opposed Paul and rebuked Peter for eating with Cornelius. Irenaeus (III 2:1) stated that John's Gospel and Epistle were written in opposition to Cerinthus. Whether these traditions are accepted or not (and it seems conventional to disregard Epiphanius), it is apparent that the report regarding Cerinthus' doctrine removes him from the purely Graeco-Oriental sector of influence, because he accepted the manhood of Jesus and His resurrection (although according to Epiphanius His resurrection awaited the advent of the new kingdom).¹⁶

Many scholars, therefore, are taking seriously the relationship between Judaism and the early varieties of gnosticism and reconsidering the above evidence especially in the light of other studies.

II. PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE STUDIES

Studies in these documents have had to take into consideration source criticism because Epiphanius has included among the sacred books of the Ebionites, a writing which he names the "Journeys of Peter." His quotations from the Ebionite gospel have been shown to be in agreement with the portion of the

¹⁵See note by A. C. McGiffert on Eusebius, III: 28:1.

¹⁶J. G. Davies, "The Origins of Docetism," Studia Patristica, VI (1962), 17.

text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies and Recognitions which described Peter's journeys. This established a relationship between the Clementines, Ebionism and Epiphanius' description of the Ebionites.¹⁷ Source-criticism, being applied to both the Homilies and the Recognitions, produced an ancient document "The Preaching of Peter."¹⁸ The whole writing has a pronounced gnostic character.¹⁹ (Schoeps excises all the gnostic elements, ascribing them to the influence of Elkasaites, but this is arbitrary and does not answer the problem.)²⁰

Many consider these to be gnostic documents because of the presence of reincarnation and dualistic elements. Christ was the True Prophet, but only in the sense that truth has been proclaimed by one Being who, beginning with Adam, incarnated himself as the True Prophet again and again in Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses.²¹ The scheme of the Old

¹⁷J. Danielou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity, p. 59.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 59ff.

¹⁹O. Cullman, The Christology of the New Testament, (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 39.

²⁰J. Fitzmeyer, "The Qumran Scrolls, The Ebionites, and Their Literature," The Scrolls and the New Testament, K. Stendahl, editor (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 212, 292. Note 16; and see also O. Cullman, The Christology of the New Testament, p. 39, Note 2; and M. Simon, Review (Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums by H. J. Schoeps), Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 1 (April, 1950), pp. 114-116.

²¹O. Cullman, Ibid., p. 40.

Testament was considered in a dualistic light; the system used is known as "syzygies," which are combinations of opposites. Thus, to every True Prophet, there was opposed a False Prophet. This dualism extended into the physical realm: heaven, earth; day, night; sun, moon; life, death.²²

Others may not see gnostic tones to the extent that Cullman does, but most at least, would have to comply with Fitzmeyer who said:

In our discussion of dualism we rejected the idea that either the Qumran or the Pseudo-Clementine dualism was Gnostic. We do not intend to claim that there is no Gnosticism at all in the Ps C (Pseudo-Clementines).²³

It would appear that the Clementine materials prove:

It is altogether false to set Jewish Christian theology and gnosticism over against one another as two opposite poles, so to speak, between which the theology of the early church moved. The Jewish Christian Christology especially is usually considered the antithesis of gnostic-Docetic Christology. In reality, the sources reveal that it is precisely the earliest Christian gnosticism, which we can trace back into the New Testament itself, that bears a Jewish Christian character. The letters of Ignatius which contain the oldest definite statements we possess about Docetism, leave no doubt about the Jewish Christian origin of the Christological heresy Ignatius combats.²⁴

One can readily appreciate that Cullman's whole approach to the New Testament was affected by his studies in the

²²Fitzmeyer, op. cit., p. 216.

²³Ibid., p. 231.

²⁴Cullman, op. cit., p. 39f.

Clementines. As a strand in the evidence for Jewish Gnosticism, it makes a strong cord.

III. LETTERS OF IGNATIUS

Discussion of the letters of Ignatius is valuable at this point, though we anticipate to a certain extent some future arguments.

A major battleground in Ignatian studies has been the question, whether Ignatius was "combatting two distinct heresies which were rampant in the churches of Asia Minor or (was) he combatting only one form of Judaeo-gnosticism?"²⁵ Einar Molland has said: "There can be no doubt, however that Ignatius accused the same persons of Judaism as well as of docetism. This has been the communis opinio since Theodor Zahn's and Lightfoot's masterly contributions...."²⁶ Indeed, there have been recent attempts²⁷ to establish two heretical parties, but they founder on exposition of Ignatius' Epistle to the Magnesians 8-11 where, in discussing the Judaizers, reference is made to their denial of Christ's death, showing that the

²⁵L. W. Barnard, Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and Their Background, (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), p. 23.

²⁶Einar Molland, "The Heretics Combated by Ignatius of Antioch," The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, V (April, 1954), p. 1.

²⁷Barnard, op. cit., p. 23; and cf. J. G. Davies, "Review. (St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch," by V. Corwin], Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 12 (April, 1961), pp. 95-96.

107

"so-called Judaism and docetism are inseparable."²⁸ (R. Grant's method of treating the problem of the denial of Christ's death in this verse was to say that the reference was "more likely...incidental,"²⁹ which is hardly a satisfactory explanation). Barnard finds reinforcement for a recognition of a Judaeo-Docetism in the evidence that Jewish speculation did influence gnostic thought and the realization that Judaism was not a monolithic structure.³⁰ It is not necessary to look to Graeco-oriental ideas of divine impassibility or the evil of matter; the scandal of the cross and the impossibility of the transcendent God becoming man were sufficient explanation for Jewish Docetism.³¹

It appeared that the Judaizers did not require circumcision and in fact were not circumcised themselves, because Ignatius wrote (Ad. Philad. 6:1): "It is better to hear Christianity from a man who is circumcised than Judaism from an uncircumcised."³²

²⁸Molland, op. cit.

²⁹Robert M. Grant, Ignatius of Antioch (Vol. IV of The Apostolic Fathers, (Camden: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1966), p. 63.

³⁰Barnard, Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and Their Background, p. 24.

³¹Davies, "The Origin of Docetism," p. 17ff.

³²Molland attempts to show that Ignatius' accusation of the heretics is limited to their misuse of the Old Testament to prove Docetism, i.e., this was the extent of their Judaism. His weakness is in interpreting the reference to Law as being of Christ and not Moses (Molland, p. 2) and disregarding expressions like "practice Judaism" (Ad. Magu 10.3), which surely refers to a way of life and not exegesis.

This could mean that the group had been influenced by the "Baptist" philosophy of heterodox Jewish or Jewish Christian sects. Certainly the Jewish element seemed to be different from that opposed by St. Paul in Galatians. The Gnostic elements did bear resemblance to that of the pastorals in the reference to "profitless fables" (Ignatius Ad. Magn. 8:1 cf. I Tim. 1:4, 6, 7; II Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14).

Docetism "was one of the earliest Christian heresies as Jerome noted: 'The blood of Christ was still fresh in Judaea when His body was said to be a phantasm' (adv. Lucif. 23)."³³ Cullman states emphatically that Docetism was the great Christological heresy of ancient times, and that in the New Testament it was opposed not only in the Johannine corpus but also by Paul. By their attitude to the law, Paul's opponents proved that for them the atoning death of Christ was not the central redemptive event.³⁴

The fact that Docetism, a form of Gnosticism, appeared in the earliest days in Jewish dress, probably before the definitely Greek form, is yet another proof of the thesis.

IV. MANDAEAN STUDIES

Another avenue of studies in gnostic origins, which seems to point a finger toward Judaism, is that of the Mandaeans of

³³Barnard, op. cit., p. 24.

³⁴O. Cullman, Christ and Time, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), p. 125.

Iraq and Iran. Some scholars distrust the use of Mandaean texts in the broader field of Gnosticism. Contrary to Jonas and Bultmann, R. McL. Wilson has said that "the present trend appeared to be towards excluding the Mandaeans from the discussion of gnostic origins."³⁵ However, he is probably expressing the view of Anglo-Saxon scholarship. One can understand the disenchantment when it is realized that in the early part of the century, writers on the gospel of John were dominated by Mandaean theories. Reaction to this trend set in, sped by the publication of Manichean fragments in the 1930's which seemed to disprove Mandaean primacy over Manichaeism.³⁶ However, it was in the 1930's that Lady E. S. Drower began her work and since the Second World War, Italian and Scandinavian scholars have shown great interest. German studies have also been developed beyond the prewar level.³⁷

One scholar has given cause to reassess Mandaean primacy over Manichaeism. Save-Soderbergh has shown that the Manichaean Psalms of Thomas were based upon extant Mandaean hymns, thus establishing that the latter must have existed prior to the former, i.e., at least in the third century A.D. and probably earlier.³⁸

³⁵R. McL. Wilson, "Some Recent Studies in Gnosticism," p. 38.

³⁶E. M. Yamauchi, "The Present Status of Mandaean Studies," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 25 (April, 1966), p. 89ff.

³⁷Ibid., p. 90ff.

³⁸Ibid., p. 91.

The Mandaeans were indebted to the Jews for a number of elements in their magic (the magic bowls provided the earlier Mandaic texts) in spite of their antipathy to the Jews.³⁹ There were parallels between the names of Mandaean divinities and those found in Hellenistic magical papyri.⁴⁰ Comparisons of Mandaean magic bowl texts have been made with Minoan materials from Crete, which were dated circ. 19th to 15 centuries B.C. and considered Semitic, and the associations were obvious.⁴¹ Incidentally, in the magic texts angels were more prominent than the semi-divinities of the later official religion, proving the latter to be accretions.⁴² The use of the word "Jordan" as the Mandaean expression for water should not be disregarded. It has been pointed out that "jordan" in the Hebrew Bible was not a proper noun; the word also may be related to Iardanus on Crete and Iardanus on the Greek mainland.⁴³ These facts indicate a relationship between Mandaeanism and the Hellenistic culture, particularly the Judaistic form of it.

In considering the more precise provenance of this gnostic sect, "the consensus of opinion today favors the theory of a western or Palestinian origin."⁴⁴ Segelberg came to this

³⁹Yamauchi, op. cit., p. 94.

⁴⁰Quispel, op. cit.

⁴¹Yamauchi, op. cit.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

conclusion from a study of the Mandaean baptismal rites. 111

When he compared Mandaean Gnostic rites and Roman Christian rites, he found them closely connected.⁴⁵ Rudolph's studies of Mandaeanism revealed that the present form is a mixture of Iranian cult materials, late Babylonian magic and astrology, Syrian Christian elements and an earlier layer which had affinities, especially in the hymns, with Syrian Gnosticism; so he reckoned that migration from the West had occurred.⁴⁶

Braun's attempts to correlate the Mandaeans and Qumran Covenanters have already been mentioned. He has probably not succeeded in fully convincing the scholars, but there are sufficient parallels to be assessed in accord with the "wide-spread non-conformity theory" already discussed.⁴⁷ Others, in support have remarked on the curious expression, the "Lord of Greatness," found in both Mandaean writings and Qumran Genesis Apocryphon.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 92.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 92ff. Some of Yamauchi's disagreements are not really strong arguments, e.g. Baptism in running water was supposedly not practiced in Qumran, however, there is a curious expression that sanctification was by running water. (I. Q 5. 3:4-5, 9). He also makes too close an identification of Qumran with Essenes which cannot be done, thus he contrasts the Mandaean emphasis on marriage and the Essenes disapproval; besides, Josephus says one group of Essenes allowed it; and cf. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls (Oxford; Blackwell, 1965), p. 107.

⁴⁸G. Quispel, "Gnosticism and the New Testament," Vigiliae Christianae, XIX (June, 1965), p. 79.

The Mandaean were called "Sabaeans" by the followers of Islam, a word meaning "submergers", which referred to their baptism (maṣbuta). The inner circle, i.e., gnostics within a group of gnostics, were called Nazorenes.⁴⁹ All these terms bring to mind the Jewish sects discussed in the previous chapter. An Arab historian Al-Nadim writing in the tenth century, identified Mani's father as a member of this sect which is further evidence of the earlier appearance of Mandaeanism before Manichaeism. Lady Drower published a book purporting to be "historical," which recounted in semi-legendary form the "Haran Gawaita"; it described an exodus from Palestine to Mesopotamia:⁵⁰

...and Haran Gawaita receiveth him and that city in which there were Nasoraeans, because there was no road for the Jewish rulers. Over them was King Ardban (Artebanus). And sixty thousand Nasoraeans abandoned the Sign of the Seven and entered the Median hills, a place where we were free from domination by all other races...and they loved the Lord, that is, Adonai, until in the House of Israel there was created something which was not placed in the womb of Mary, a daughter of Moses. It was hidden in her womb for nine months and bewitched her until the nine months were fulfilled and she was in labour and brought forth a messiah....And he took to himself a people and was called by the name of the False Messiah. And he perverted them all and made them like himself who perverted words of life and changed them into darkness and even perverted those accounted Mine. And he overturned

⁴⁹E. S. Drower, The Secret Adam, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. ix.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. xiii.

all the rites. And he and his brother dwell on Mount Sinai, and he joineth all races to him, and perverteth and joineth to himself a people, and they are called Christians.⁵¹

Their persecutors were punished by the destruction of Jerusalem which could place the flight before A. D. 70.⁵² Maruch identified the Artabanus mentioned as the one who reigned 12 B. C. - Ca. A. D. 38 (there were five Parthian kings so named).⁵³ If this description and these identifications are accepted, then the necessary conclusion is that a Jewish sect formed the nucleus of the gnostic Mandaean sect.

J. Thomas linked the Mandaeans with the Elchaisites⁵⁴ and Lady E. S. Drower has pursued that thesis. Similarities were that Baptism was required and both sects required witnesses to the baptism. The Elchaisites required heaven, water, holy spirits, angels of prayer, oil, salt, and earth; the Mandaeans invoked the witness of pihta (bread made with salt), mambuha and the Jordan (running water), Habsaba (the personified first day of the week, Sunday), and Zidga (oblation).⁵⁵ If certain mishaps occurred, both groups taught that the unfortunate one was to be immersed immediately.⁵⁶ The Elchaisites

⁵¹E. S. Drower, Haran Gawaita and Mas Cuta d- Hihil - Ziwa, (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1953), p. 3,⁴ cited by E. Yamauchi, "The Present Status of Mandaean Studies," p. 91.

⁵²Drower, Ibid., p. xiii.

⁵³Yamauchi, op. cit., p. 91ff.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 91.

⁵⁵Drower, op. cit., p. 93.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 92ff.

believed in the lawfulness of denying Christ in times of
persecutions (Eus. VI. 38), a striking parallel to the
doctrine of dissimulation extant in modern Islam, within
Iranian Shiism, and of which Cyrus Gordon found evidence in the
Book of Esther that it was an ancient Iranian custom.⁵⁷

However, there is deeper ground for comparison, viz., the
central cult of both was the Heavenly Man. According to
Hippolytus, a Syrian named Alcibiades had appeared in Rome,
who had brought some book alleging that a certain just man,
Elchasai, had received this from Serae, a town in Parthia,
and that he gave it to one called Sobiai (Rebut. IX. 8). The
Elkaisites were an immersing sect. So a fair identification of
Sobiai might be "immersers" because it comes from *√*לש, a Semitic
root meaning "to dye, to dip or immerse."⁵⁸ With reference to
Serae, a town in Parthia, there seems to be no record of a town
by this name; however, a sect of pious Jews called Serae was
mentioned in Pseudo-Clement (VIII. 48).

The meaning of the name Elchasai has been disputed by
critics, whether it referred to the founder, the angel who
revealed the doctrine, or the book itself.⁵⁹ However, Lady

⁵⁷Cyrus H. Gordon, The World of the Old Testament (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1958), p. 284.

⁵⁸E. S. Drower, "Adam and the Elkaïsaites," Studia Patristica, IV (1961), 407.

⁵⁹A. C. McGiffert, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, I, 280, Note 1.

Drower takes the name as Epiphanius interpreted it, i.e., as two words El and Kasai; El meaning High God and Kašai meaning "hidden," "esoteric," "mystic," or "secret." So the name would mean Secret or Hidden God. The Arab historian Al-Nadim was to say in the tenth century that the founder of the Sabaeans, i.e., Mandaeans, was Al-Hasaih, i.e., El Kasai.⁶⁰ In the secret scrolls of the Nasoraeans (the inner circle of the Mandaeans) the central figure was named Adam Kasai - Secret Adam, Anthropos, the Cosmic Man.⁶¹ The hatred for anything Jewish, e.g., "El" or "Adonai," would explain the eradication of the word "El" from Kasai.⁶² The Elchaisites had also "an idealized personified image of Man or Humanity." Their heresy was a school, not a separate entity, in that it penetrated the Ebionites, Nazorenes, Ossaeans, Nasarenes and Sampsaeans (according to Epiphanius).⁶³ The Sampsaeans were a pagan sect, i.e., they were monotheists, but not Christian, Jewish, nor Greek. So the doctrine of Elchasai adjusted to various environments. "In origin, (Elchaisism) was a gnostic Jewish sect strongly influenced by Iranian dualism

⁶⁰Drower, The Secret Adam, p. 92; and "Adam and the Elkasites," p. 407.

⁶¹Drower, The Secret Adam, p. 102.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., p. 94ff; and cf. E. S. Drower, "Adam and the Elkasites," p. 406.

and supple enough to be fitted into several systems with a Jewish background."⁶⁴ One cannot ignore the implication that Mandaeanism sprang from the same source, whatever that may be.

So in Mandaean research, there are scholars who say that converging lines are evident in Mandaeanism, Qumran, Cheno-boskian Gnostics, and Minoans;⁶⁵ and that parallels can be drawn between Samaritanism, Judaism, Parseeism, and Mandaeanism.⁶⁶

V. HERMETICA

Studies in these Greek materials from an Egyptian locale have also provided interesting parallels with Judaism. "In Corpus I (the Poimanders) and in the short piece Corpus III, knowledge of the beginning of the Book of Genesis was clearly shown. Moreover Corpus I contained a doctrine derived from Jewish speculations about Adam...(i.e.,)"...a transcendental person named Anthropos."⁶⁷ The material is closely related to Philo's exposition of the origin of man. Philo found two accounts of the creation of man in Genesis and his conclusion

⁶⁴Drower, "Adam and the Elkasites," p. 406.

⁶⁵Yamauchi, "The Present Status of Mandaean Studies," p. 96.

⁶⁶Drower, The Secret Adam, p. XV, referring to M. Gaster's studies in Samaritanism.

⁶⁷W. Scott (ed.) Hermetica, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924-1936), I, 12; II, 4.

117

was that there were two kinds of men, one was heavenly and the other earthly. The way he worked out the conception of the two men was different from the Hermetist, but both owed a debt to a Hellenistic Jewish exegesis of scripture.⁶⁸ The doctrine of the Primal man is very ancient and some claim it has an Iranian origin; however, the Jewish speculative interpretation of Anthropos was the basis for the Hermetist doctrine.⁶⁹

There were resemblances to Christian Gnostics, e.g., the descent and ascent of the human soul, the notion of Demiurge, Anthropos and other terms; but they indicated the use of common sources, i.e., Stoic Platonism and Jewish speculation. No dependence of the Hermetist upon the Gnostic interpretation can be proved, because there was no concept of a Saviour in Corpus I.⁷⁰ Obviously the source of the Hermetist's doctrine was Jewish, so the finger of the Hermetist also points toward Judaism for Gnostic origins.

VI. NAG HAMMADI Gnostic LIBRARY

In autumn of 1947 a young scholar, Jean Doresse, was made aware of a new discovery of papyri in Coptic writings, and

⁶⁸C. H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), p. 148.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 146.

⁷⁰Scott, Hermetica, p. 8.

hasty perusal identified them as Gnostic materials.⁷¹ ¹¹⁸ Texts have been slowly published, which have caused great ferment in the scholastic world (perhaps not as much as the Dead Sea Scrolls).

Certain scholars have been stressing the Jewish speculative background more, as a result of studies in these texts. So Quispel in writing about the Jung Codex says:

On page 112 of the Codex, in the Treatise on the Three Natures, there occurs a passage dealing with heresies among the Jews, which will be read with close attention, now that documents on a Jewish heresy have been found by the Dead Sea.

They (sc. the Jews) have founded numerous heresies which exist down to the present day among the Jews. Some say that it is One God who spoke by the prophets; others say that there were many. Some say that God is one and singular in His being; others say that His acting is twofold and the origin of both good and evil. Some say that He is the Creator of what exists; others say that He created through His angels.⁷²

This passage quite plainly deals with Gnostic elements and labels them as Jewish. Further combination of these new texts of a Jewish background to Gnosticism is provided by the author of the Gospel of Philip: "When we were Hebrews, we were

⁷¹Jean Doresse, The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics, p. 116ff.

⁷²G. Quispel, "The Jung Codex and Its Significance," The Jung Codex, F. L. Cross, editor, (London: A. R. Mawbray & Co., Ltd., 1955), p. 62.

119

orphans....But when we became Christians we acquired Father and Mother."⁷³ This remark "may be compared with the statement ascribed to Basilidians by Irenaeus (Adv. Haer, I 24:6) 'They say that they are no longer Jews but are not yet Christians.'"⁷⁴ Together these statements indicate a Jewish or Jewish Christian background.

Other less direct indications have been found in these manuscripts. The reinterpretation of Genesis in the Apocryphon of John points toward a pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism.⁷⁵ The Gnostics of at least one school, the one from which the "Epistle to Rheginos" originated, maintained the doctrine of Resurrection as against the Greek concept of immortality, even though reinterpreting it in a spiritual non-physical sense.⁷⁶ On the basis of comparative studies of the Gospel of Thomas with the work of the Syrian mystic Makarios, Tatian's Diatesseron

⁷³R. M. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 191.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 193.

⁷⁵R. M. Wilson, The Gospel of Philip (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 68; G. Quispel, "Gnosticism and the New Testament" p. 76; Wilson, The Gnostic Problem (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 154; and W. C. Till, "The Gnostic Apocryphon of John," Journal of Ecclesiastical History III (April, 1952), pp. 14-22.

⁷⁶W. C. Van Unnik, "The Newly Discovered Gnostic 'Epistle to Rheginos' on the Resurrection," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XV (Oct. 1964), pp. 141-167.

and the Pseudo-Clementines, Quispel has argued that the Gospel of Thomas is Jewish-Christian but an Encratitic production and not Gnostic (this is well within the modulation theory presented). That there is a Jewish-Christian element is a fact accepted as fairly certain, but most scholars are not prepared to go any further than this at present.⁷⁷ These discoveries are too recent for exact judgments to be made, but references such as the ones quoted show that the Jewish factor was present.

VII. SUMMARY

All these various approaches have pointed toward a Jewish background to the Gnostic/syncretistic speculation that arose in the later half of the first century A. D. and blossomed in the second century. The ultimate origin of the myths utilized does not really matter. Proof has been attempted of the thesis that Hellenistic influences had penetrated deeply into Palestinian culture in varying degrees of acceptance. This meant that Graeco-Oriental thought was abroad in Palestine. Thus, to prove that gnosticism arose in Syria and Palestine out of Judaism (including Samaritanism) does not involve a denial of Hellenistic influence. The combined evidence of the Church

⁷⁷R. M. Wilson, "Second Thoughts XI: The Gnostic Gospels from Nag Hammadi," Expository Times, 78 (Nov., 1966), p. 39; cf. Quispel, op. cit., p. 65ff; and R. M. Wilson, Studies in the Gospel of Thomas (London: Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 117ff.

Fathers, the Clementines, the Letters of Ignatius, Mandaean
Studies, Hermetica and the Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library,
makes the existence of a Jewish Gnosticism hard to deny.

CHAPTER VII

JEWISH GNOSTIC THOUGHT:

PRECURSOR OF THE CHRISTIAN PROBLEM

It should be repeated that the purpose of this research is not to prove that Judaism is the ultimate source of gnostic speculative thought. The aim is to show that the proximate origin of such thought is in Judaism.

Evidence does point to the influence of Oriental thought upon Judaism (especially on the Pharisees and the Essenes) in cosmogony, angelology, astrology, etc. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the presence of mysticism and gnosticism in the Apocalyptic, Rabbinic and Philonic writings presented in the following material might be considered as an important link in the chain of evidence forged thus far.

I. THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF

NOMISTIC AND APOCALYPTIC JUDAISM

The tendency of scholars has been to treat various strands of Jewish thought as almost mutually exclusive, and to look to one specific group as the representative of a particular viewpoint; e.g., "Schechter, Ginzberg, Moore and others have endeavored to create the impression that the apocalyptic

125
teachings were not in the mainstream of Judaism."¹ So the terms "legalists" and "apocalyptic" were used. Yet, the topics that all Jews, other than the careless and apostate, were interested in, were the study of the law, eschatology and the nation.² The differences lay in interpretation of the law, the degree to which stress was laid on eschatology, the way that the future hope of the nation was to come to pass, and the speculative quality of the mind.³

The error of establishing a dichotomy between legalism and apocalyptic has been opposed forcefully by a number of scholars. "The books of the apocrypha, including their apocalyptic portions, are rich in halakic elements;"⁴ so it is apparent that, in its attitude toward the Torah, Apocalyptic was at one with Pharisaism;⁵ e.g., "Woe to them that pervert the words of righteousness, and transgress the eternal law " (I Enoch 99:2). Further, the community of eschatological doctrine may be emphasized by the fact that the major themes of the Apocalyptists

¹Joshua Bloch, On The Apocalyptic in Judaism (Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1952), p. 136f.

²J. Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 451.

³Ibid., p. 451f.

⁴Black, op. cit., p. 143.

⁵W. D. Davies, Christian Origin's and Judaism (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962), p. 22.

126

became the accepted doctrine of the Rabbis; e.g., The Travail of the Messianic Times, The Gathering of the Exiles; The Days of the Messiah, The New Jerusalem, The Judgment, Gehenna and The Resurrection.⁶

The canon of the scriptures established by the Rabbis included Daniel and other books with apocalyptic elements.⁷ The Mishnah included an apocalyptic passage attributed to Eliezar the Great, the disciple of Johanan ben Zakkai.⁸ Rabbi Akiba, who gave order to the Halakot, had definite Messianic beliefs and supported the Bar Kochba revolt as a Messianic occurrence.⁹ "The juxtaposition of eschatology and religio-ethical ideals is now seen to be native to Judaism."¹⁰ "In all likelihood they ('Amme ha 'aretz, Essenes, Hasidim, Pharisees and Sadducees) all had in their ranks men who occupied themselves with apocalyptic thought."¹¹

⁶Ibid., pp. 23-24.

⁷D. S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 30.

⁸Ibid., p. 31.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Davies, op. cit., p. 29f.

¹¹Bloch, On The Apocalyptic in Judaism, p. 136.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine the relationship of Jewish esoteric tradition to the speculation of gnosticism, so the study will be limited by that objective.

"Apocalyptic" is an adjectival form of Apocalypse, which means "revelation" or "disclose." Another term related to this material is "Apocrypha," which was used in reference to deuterocanonical books. The word originally meant something "hidden" or "secret."¹² Both words taken together give one of the essentials of apocalyptic literature, viz., the revelation of hidden secrets. The apocalyptists' message was mainly literary in form whereas the prophets' message was primarily conveyed orally.¹³ Apocalyptic literature was symbolic in language, and in some cases was rooted in the Old Testament, though much was obtained from speculation and mythology.¹⁴

The apocalyptist, in many cases, was taken up into heaven, there to learn heavenly secrets; in many of the writings, reference was made to the "heavenly tablets" on which were recorded the secrets of the ages; e.g., I Enoch, Jubilees and Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.¹⁵

¹²D. S. Russell, Between the Testaments (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1960), p. 75.

¹³Russell, Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, p. 118ff.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 122ff.

¹⁵Russell, Between the Testaments, p. 96.

The apocalyptist was not only interested in the future but in a total space/time plan. He speculated on the beginnings of things, the creation and fall of man and angels; the source of evil and the conflict between good and bad cosmic forces. This speculation extended into a dualism of light and darkness, good and evil, God and Satan; Messianic conjectures especially related to a transcendent figure, "the Son of Man;" and the final end, including life after death, resurrection, judgment and supernatural intervention at the close of history.¹⁶

In the cosmogony of early Judaism there were three heavens; however, this later evolved to seven, e.g., II Enoch.¹⁷ Angelology was much developed over that of the Old Testament so that there were now seven archangels. Each of the natural elements, the seasons, and the nations had its angel; so also had the heavenly bodies, although in some instances the stars were represented as angels.¹⁸

The opposition to God was much more detailed than in the Old Testament, with descriptions of how the fallen archangels led men astray by teaching magic, etc. (I Enoch).¹⁹ This opposition was to be crushed in a mighty cosmic battle at the

¹⁶Russell, Method and Message, p. 104ff.

¹⁷J. Danielou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964); p. 174.

¹⁸Russell, op. cit., p. 244.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 254ff.

end of time (compare the War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness in the Dead Sea Scrolls).²⁰ So there was a belief in two ages. This present age had come under the sway of Satan and his angels; thus it was to be replaced by a glorious age. There was a pessimistic view of this world balanced by an optimism for the immediate future.²¹

The idea of resurrection was basic to most of the apocalyptic books; though the concept of the immortality of the soul, which seeks release at death from the prison house of the body, was to be found in some writings.²² Another atypical doctrine was that of the pre-existence of the soul, to be found in II Enoch 24. 4-5, Wisdom 8.19 and in IV Maccabees.

Very significant to our understanding of the later rise of gnosticism was the personification of wisdom as a power of God in female form.²³ Wisdom was considered as creator of man: "On the sixth day I commanded my wisdom to create man from seven consistencies...." (II Enoch 30. 8-9).²⁴ God was remote; therefore an intermediary was necessary, one who possessed all the attributes of deity, omnipotent and omniscient (Wisdom 7.27).²⁵ "In every generation she passes into holy souls and

²⁰Ibid., p. 263ff. ²¹Ibid., p. 267ff. ²²Ibid., p. 267ff.

²³A. D. Nock, "Gnosticism," The Harvard Theological Review, 57 (October, 1964), p. 266.

²⁴Russell, Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, p. 152.

²⁵R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of The Old Testament in English (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1913), I, 527.

makes them friend of God and prophets" (Wisdom 7.27, R.S.V.).²⁶

Computations by the calendar were also among the pre-occupations of the apocalyptists.

In I Enoch 72-82, for example, the writer describes the movement of the sun through its twelve 'portals', the different phases of the moon and the movement of the stars, and sets forth the laws of the heavenly bodies from which there can be no deviation 'till the new creation is accomplished' (72.1). Their measurement of time can always be relied upon, for 'the sun and stars bring in all the years exactly, so that they do not advance or delay their position by a single day unto eternity (74.12)."²⁷

Human life and historical events were said to be determined by the heavenly bodies, which were in turn controlled by angels.²⁸ Determinism was related to astrology, and certainly both might be considered leading characteristics of the apocalyptic.²⁹

Evidence of the Jewish origin of gnosticism has led one scholar to make the statement: "We are now committed to the thesis that gnosticism originated out of apocalyptic Judaism."³⁰ For such a claim he posited only the view that apocalyptic Judaism was the immediate source which mediated also Greek and Iranian ideas already assimilated into it.³¹

²⁶Nock, "Gnosticism," p. 266.

²⁷Russell, op. cit., p. 209.

²⁸Ibid., p. 230.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰R. M. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 39.

³¹Ibid., p. 55.

131

It was particularly the "heavenly world" that seemed to be derived from the apocalyptists, i.e., from calendar speculation came the four, seven and thirty factors of the spirit world of Lights, Spirits and Aeons. One factor very prominent in gnosticism was the ascent of the soul into the heavenly places, passing through the seven heavens. It was such books as the Testament of Levi, II Enoch and II Baruch, in which the ascent is found, which seemed to be the background from which the gnostics borrowed.³² Most gnostic systems were related to a Redeemer who descended from the heavens to show the way through them, and these all seemed to be based on Jesus Christ. Certainly Simon Magus and Menander post-date Jesus. However, in Jewish thought, there was a background of the descent of the Name of god, Wisdom and the Shekinah.³³ There is no available evidence of a Pre-Christian gnostic Redeemer myth. Apocalyptic symbolism did seem to be closely related to that which arose in gnosticism.

III. RABBINIC LITERATURE

Evidence of even more importance has arisen as to Jewish gnosticism, from the study of the documents of the Rabbis themselves.

³²Ibid., p. 61; and cf. Daniélou, Theology of Jewish Christianity, p. 173ff.

³³Grant, Ibid., p. 66; and Daniélou, Ibid., p. 206f.

The heretics mentioned in the Talmud under the name "Minim" are now being identified as gnostic Jews and only in a few cases are they still considered as references to Jewish Christians.³⁴ They were condemned as heretics because they held a dualistic doctrine of two powers, i.e., of good and evil.³⁵ The expression among the Minim of Palestine "on account of the good is thy Name named" (not also on account of the evil) was considered by the Rabbis to be heretical (Mishna Megilla 4, 9).³⁶ Philo mentions that this was the belief of the Essenes.³⁷

Justin Martyr from Schechem in Samaria, in Dialogue Cum Trypho 62, asserted that a Jewish heresy taught that the body of man was made by angels. This is corroborated by a passage in the Mishnah: "For this reason a single man was created in order that the heretics could not say; There are many powers in Heaven." (Sanh. 4,5)³⁸ The Talmud also said that there were

³⁴Ralph Marcus, "Pharisees, Essenes, and Gnostics," Journal of Biblical Literature, 73 (1954), p. 159.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶G. Quispel, "The Jung Codex and Its Significance" The Jung Codex, F. L. Cross, editor, (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1955), p. 64; See also Note 11.

³⁷R. M. Wilson, "The Early History of the Exegesis of Genesis 1:26", Studia Patristica, (1957), 423.

³⁸Quispel, op. cit., p. 66ff.

heretics who taught that angels were concerned in creation:

When Moses wrote the Torah, he described the work of each several day. But when he reached the verse (Gen. 1:26) 'Then spake God, Let us make man,' he said 'Lord of the world ! What an opportunity thou givest the heretics to open their mouths!' He answered, 'Write, who wishes to go astray can go astray.' (Gen. Rabba 1, 26)³⁹

It is possible that Christians were meant by the above statement, but it was no less possible that non-Christian unorthodox Jews were meant; e.g., even Rabbi Johanan said that God did nothing without seeking counsel of the angels.⁴⁰

Some of the Minim worshipped the angels; the Talmud records a controversy on this matter. (Bab. Sanh. 38b):

A heretic said to Rabbi Idi: 'It is written: And to Moses He said, Go up to Jahweh (Ex. 24:1). One expects go up to Me.' Idi replied to him: 'That is Metatron whose Name is as the Name of his Lord, as it is written: 'For my Name is in him.' (Ex. 23:21). 'As that is so, ought one not to serve him?' (Asked the Minim who thus appeared to demand for Jaodel Divine worship).⁴¹

These heretics distinguished between God Himself and His Viceregent, the Mediator of Revelation and the Lord of the Angels.⁴² The Rabbis in the sense of Arius emphasized the creatureliness of the angel Jaodel-Metatron, whereas the Minim held to the divinity of this second hypostasis.⁴³ Definitely, the Minim appeared to be dualistically oriented Jews.

³⁹Quispel, op. cit., p. 64.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 67f.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., p. 68.

More important is the recognition that there was an esoteric doctrine taught within Pharisaic circles during the period of the Second Temple.⁴⁴ Origen, in his preface to Song of Songs, mentions the four significant texts exegeted in an esoteric manner; viz., the beginning of Genesis, the story of creation; the first chapter of Ezekiel, the angels and vision of God's throne-chariot (the "Merkabah"); the end of Ezekiel, the description of the future Temple; and the Song of Songs, the mystical Body of God. Apparently it was considered inadvisable to make such speculations public. It was

forbidden to speak of the syzygial doctrine of the male and female principles (Arayot) before three persons; of that which was before the creation of the world (Maaseh Bereshit) before two persons; and of the beyond, the world of the vision of God's throne (Merkavah), even before one, unless he [were] a sage capable of apprehending it by the power of his own mind.⁴⁵

For this reason, the Pharisees are not usually associated with esoteric thought.

Pharisaism did entertain mysticism. "The oldest testimonies suggest that the leaders of the people were not at first unfriendly to these experiences and doctrines,"⁴⁶ and

⁴⁴G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Gnosticism (London: Thames and Hudson, 1955), p. 42.

⁴⁵Leo Baeck, "The Origin of Jewish Mysticism," The Pharisees and Other Essays (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), p. 95.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 100f.

in fact they were involved in such mysticism. Johanan ben Zakkai and Eliezar Ben Arakh were pictured as discussing the Merkabah secrets. Also the story was told that "four men entered paradise...-Ben Zoma, Ben Azzai, Aher and Rabbi Akiba. Ben Zoma looked and died; Ben Azzai looked and went mad; Aher destroyed the shoots (that is, he caused defection among the youth); and Rabbi Akiba entered in peace and left in peace" (Hagigah 77b).⁴⁷ Later there was a rejection of this tradition probably due to the rise of Gnosticism as a contending force. The editor of the Mishnah, Jehudah, did all he could to eliminate these mystical elements but some of it was preserved elsewhere in the Tosefta.⁴⁸

The literature which really exhibited the mystical "gnosis" was that known as the "Hekhalot." It is mostly attributed to Rabbinic authors, although identification with them should not be considered as really positive.

The "Hekhalot" was mainly concerned with the description of the Merkabah - the chariot-throne and the ascent of the mystic to view such a glorious sight. Yahweh dwelt in seven palaces and at the gate of each palace there were gatekeepers, those of the final gate being especially terrifying. The traveller, in this experience, was to show at each gate

⁴⁷Baeck, op. cit., p. 100f.

⁴⁸Scholem, op. cit., p. 42.

specified seals to the angels in charge. The angels of the sixth gate were particularly described as those who destroyed any impure amanuensis (one taking notes as the visionary described his trip) of one who was making the visionary trip; these angels also determined that the one who was making the trip had that right. The mystic was eventually brought inside the seventh gate, there to behold the majesty of the throne. When he first went in, he was frightened by the appearance of the Holy Beasts which bore the throne, but then the Beasts covered their faces and the mystic gazed upon the Throne and Him who dwelt on it.⁴⁹

Scholem listed eight examples of this type of literature and discussed their relationship to Gnostic, Talmudic, Christian, and Magical material.⁵⁰

The older apocalyptic literature can not be absolutely identified with this later mystical material. However, "...one fact remains certain: the main subjects of the later Merkabah mysticism already occupy a central position in this oldest esoteric literature best represented by the Book of Enoch."⁵¹ The notion of the ascent of the soul through a series of

⁴⁹Morton Smith, "Observations on Hekhalot Rabbati," Biblical and Other Studies, A. Altmann, editor, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 142-160.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 150.

⁵¹Sholem, op. cit., p. 43.

heavens was frequent in the pseudipigrapha, and gnosticism.⁵²

However, more specific identifications are possible. First, "all the different versions of the Hekhaloth lay great emphasis upon the knowledge of various seals....Seals closely paralleling these are to be found in the Coptic Gnostic sources coming from the Valentinian School."⁵³ Second, much of the celestial personnel and the magical names of the deity were to be found in the magical papyri and gnosticism. Since the material showed no sign of Christian influence, Scholem argued for a pre-Christian period of relationship.⁵⁴ Third, the material which described God's body had "parallels in Rabbinic exegesis, especially Song of Songs, in gnosticism, in the magical Papyri,...in pagan Greek and Iranian material...[and] the Book of Elchasai."⁵⁵ Finally, interesting observations related to the magical papyri made for a closer relationship between gnosticism and magic.

The speculative religious element in these remains of the Hebrew and Aramaic Hekhaloth book is so closely interwoven with the magical one, that I feel the distinction drawn by many scholars today between gnostic

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³G. Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1960), p. 32.

⁵⁴Smith, op. cit., p. 150ff. ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 151.

literature proper and that of the magical papyri is somewhat overstated.⁵⁶

Further, many magical inscriptions "stand as testimony to the lively interplay of genuinely Jewish and syncretistic magic."⁵⁷

Scholem linked the Hekalot literature with the Apocalypse of Abraham so that, although he dated the literature in the second or third century, he linked the tradition with the first century.⁵⁸ The process then that G. Scholem advocated was that "...Jewish esoteric tradition absorbed Hellenistic elements similar to those we actually find in Hermetic writings. Such elements entered Jewish tradition before Christianity developed, or at any rate before Christian gnosticism as a distinctive force came into being."⁵⁹ This would explain the Jewish element in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, collected by Clement of Alexandria from the writings of one of Valentinus' pupils.⁶⁰

Incidentally, in two fragments of an Angelic Liturgy found at Qumran there were references to seven sovereign princes (i.e. chief angels) and the Throne-chariot of Ezekiel 1.⁶¹ This in addition to the doctrine of the two ways - of the good

⁵⁶Scholem, *op. cit.*, p. 75; see p. 81ff; and Smith, "Observations on *Hekhalot Rabbati*," p. 158f.

⁵⁷Scholem, *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 42; and Smith, *Ibid.*, p. 151ff.

⁵⁹Scholem, *Ibid.*, p. 34. ⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹Russell, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, p. 47.

and evil spirit within man⁶²-draws the Covenanters into the
mystic circle as well as apocalyptic. 139

Such a speculative tradition, showing continuity with the apocalyptic traditions and relationships with non-Jewish writings, certainly pointed again to the diversity within Judaism and the strong likelihood of a Jewish proximate origin for gnosticism.

IV. PHILO

Another strand of thought which should be mentioned, even though its influence in Palestine is not possible to gauge, is Alexandrian Judaism represented by Philo. Although an observer of the Law, he applied the method of Plato in order to allegorize the Torah.⁶³ In this, he was not alone; he had predecessors and contemporaries in Hellenistic Jewry applying the same method: Aristobulus, Aristeas, The Therapeutae and Josephus.⁶⁴

To him, the Torah "was a material copy of a Platonic original. Philo...is looking, and with him apparently at least

⁶²W. D. Davies, Christian Origins and Judaism (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962), p. 145ff; and cf. L. W. Barnard, Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and Their Background (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), p. 87ff.

⁶³H. A. Wolfson, The Philosophy of the Church Fathers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Vol. I, 1964), p. 246.

⁶⁴R. McL Wilson, The Gnostic Problem (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 35.

his most intelligent associates, not directly at Gentile mythology, but at the Hellenistic mystic philosophy which made any mythology only a typology for its doctrines."⁶⁵ Thus there was an Idea and a material resemblance to that Idea. This dualism was expressed in Philo in that he introduced instead of the Wisdom figure, Logos, a male rather than female intermediary.⁶⁶

Philo's exegesis of the passages in Genesis related to the creation of man resulted in a contrast of a natural man moulded from the dust and a heavenly man made in the image of God.⁶⁷ Such a Platonic treatment of the Scriptures certainly had its effect upon gnosticism and the early fathers.

The Egyptian gnostics, Valentinius and Basilides; and the Christian Fathers, Clement and Origen are indebted to this background. However, it must be stressed that the gnostics used Greek philosophy merely as a vehicle for their own symbols.⁶⁸

V. THEMATIC STUDIES

Studies have been done in particular themes to show relationships within particular doctrines.

⁶⁵E. R. Goodenough, By Light, Light (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), p. 8.

⁶⁶Wilson, op. cit., p. 40ff. ⁶⁷Ibid., p. 45.

⁶⁸Wolfson, Philosophy of the Church Fathers, p. 559ff.

Quispel and others made a study of the gnostic Anthropos and posited the thesis that the immediate origin for the concept was speculation on the Jewish Adam.⁶⁹

Wilson studied the history of the exegesis of the plural form in Genesis 1:26 that gave rise to the doctrine of angel creators. He reached the conclusion that there were three lines of tradition, the Alexandrian, Iranaeus, and the Gnostics and that "all three appear to derive their origin from Jewish speculation, the Alexandrians in particular from Philo."⁷⁰

The Name of God was also presented as a connective link between Judaism, gnosticism and magic.⁷¹ Not much has been done following this method, but what has been done demonstrates a Jewish background.

⁶⁹G. Quispel, "Der Gnostische Anthropos and die Jüdische Tradition," Eranos Jahrbuch, 22 (1953), pp. 194-234; and cf. G. Widengren, "Royal Ideology and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," Promise and Fulfillment. Essays presented to S. H. Hooke, F. F. Bruce, editor (Edinburgh: 2 & 2. Clark, 1963), pp. 202-212; and Widengren, "Baptism and Enthronement in Some Jewish-Christian Gnostic Documents," The Saviour God, presented to E. O. James, S. G. F. Brandon, editor, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1963), pp. 205-217; and C. H. Kraeling, Anthropos and Son of Man (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927).

⁷⁰R. M. Wilson, "The Early History of the Exegesis of Gen. 1:26," Studia Patristica, I (1957), 440; and cf. G. Quispel, "The Jung Codex and Its Significance," The Jung Codex, F. L. Cross, translator and editor, (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1955), pp. 35-78.

⁷¹Quispel, Ibid.; and cf. G. Quispel, "Gnosticism and the New Testament," Vigilae Christianae, 19 (June, 1965), pp. 65-85.

VI. SUMMARY

This evidence adds up to the fact that all the ingredients necessary for gnosticism were present at the beginning of the Christian era, which needed only the catalyst of the emergence of Jesus and the assertion of him as a supernatural being for this "gnosis," cosmology, angelology, etc., to be brought together in various systems, some claiming to be Christian and others not. The identification of the Saviour aspect with the speculations regarding Adam, Enoch, Noah, etc., provided the Anthropos figure. The recognition of a diverse Judaism, which included those involved in esoteric religion, leads to a different understanding of the background of primitive Christianity.

In the past as soon as Hellenistic influences could be shown in a New Testament writing, the immediate conclusion was: this must be written very late. The Gospel of John is a case in point. Since Hellenistic elements are found in the Gospel, it was believed that a very late origin was proved. Behind this false conclusion stood a false, or at least too schematic, conception of the origin of Christianity, namely the idea that at first Christianity was merely Jewish and then later became Hellenistic. This basic error led to a whole series of further errors, such as the supposition that the so-called gnostic heresy first sprang up, late, in Hellenistic circles outside Palestine.⁷²

Gnosticism was not late, there was a Jewish Gnosticism present

⁷²O. Cullman, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts," Journal of Biblical Literature, 74 (1955), p. 214.

in the early days of the church. The next question to determine is whether or not there was a transferal of this problem from Judaism to Christianity.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONNECTING LINKS: JUDAISM TO CHRISTIANITY, PALESTINE TO ASIA MINOR

In a previous chapter we observed that the distinctions between Palestinian and Diasporic Judaism were more the result of a study of two different groups of source material rather than a real difference. Now a study of the relationship of Palestine to the Diaspora, of the extent of the Diaspora, and of syncretism in it provides the connecting link to a study of Christianity and its problems of syncretism.

I. THE DIASPORA AND ~~PALESTINE~~

There was constant contact between the exiles and the home country. Jews from all quarters of the world made regular pilgrimages to the Temple in Jerusalem at every festival. The number of Jews assembled in Jerusalem on feast days has been estimated as high as 2,700,000 by Josephus.¹ "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians,"

¹E. Schürer, The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1885), Div. II, Vol. 2, p. 291.

145

heard Peter preach at Pentecost (Acts 2:9-11). Jews from Asia caused Paul to be imprisoned in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27). The Temple tax was another source of contact in that every Jew over twenty years of age was required to pay tribute.² Men of good standing were then appointed to carry the funds to Jerusalem.³

There were communities of Diasporic Jews in Palestine.

The only synagogue inscription we have from Jerusalem comes from a Diasporic synagogue in which a Christian preached. Communities of Jews from Alexandria, Babylonia, Tarsus, Cyrene and Cappodocia are suggested by the funeral inscriptions of Joppa.⁴

The Book of Acts mentioned a synagogue of the "Libertines" or "Freedmen" (Acts 6:9) and the same verse may have included reference to other synagogues, but in any case it did mention Jews of Diasporic origin. The Freedmen were probably released captives or slaves from Rome.⁵ In the early church there was a distinct group of Hellenists, i.e., Grecian Jews (Acts 6:1).

²Schürer, Ibid., p. 289.

³Ibid.

⁴Morton Smith, "Palestinian Judaism," Israel, Moshe Davis, editor (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1956), p. 73.

⁵Pierson Parker, "Synagogue of the Freedmen," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, G. A. Buttrick, editor, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 325; and Schürer, op. cit. p. 276.

There was a constant interrelationship between the Diaspora and Palæstine.

II. THE EXTENT OF THE DIASPORA

Jewish

The Jewish Diaspora was widespread with communities in the Dictriacts of the Euphrates, Syria, Arabia, Asia Minor, Egypt, Cyrenaica, North Africa, Macedonia and Greece, Rome and Italy. Later it extended to Spain, Gaul and Germany.⁶ The Jewish population was particularly numerous in Palestine (2,500,000), Syria and Asia Minor (1,000,000), Egypt (1,000,000), Cyrenaica (100,000), Italy, Sicily and Rome (100,000), and Mesopotamia (1,000,000).⁷ These figures are probably very conservative because estimates for the Diaspora alone have ranged between 4,000,000 and 7,000,000 at the commencement of the Christian era.⁸ The number of Jews in Rome about the time of Paul's

⁶E. Schürer, "Diaspora," Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings, editor, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1905-1909), V, 91-109; and cf. Schürer, The Jewish People in the Time of Christ, Div. II, Vol. 2, pp. 219-327.

⁷J. A. Sanders, "Dispersion," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, p. 855.

⁸Charles Guignebert, The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, (New York: University Books, 1959), p. 215.

147

arrival was approximately 50,000.⁹ Mobility is demonstrated by the fact that inscriptions in the catacombs of Rome, although scanty, show the presence of Jews from Caesarea, Sepphoris, Tiberias, Laodicea and even the Adriatic coast.¹⁰

Samaritan

Co-extensive with the Jewish Diaspora was that of the Samaritans. In the first centuries of the Christian era, they were considerable in number (there is evidence that there were 300,000 in Samaria in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D.)¹¹ and were scattered throughout the great cities of Egypt, Samaria, Asia Minor and Asia Major.¹² There is even record of a synagogue in Rome.¹³

Karaites

In a previous chapter, the identification of Karaites with Sadducees and of Sadducees with Samaritans by ancient historians

⁹H. J. Leon, "The Jews of Rome in the First Centuries of Christianity," The Teacher's Yoke: Studies in Memory of Harry Trantham, E. J. Vardaman, et. al., editors, (Waco: Baylor, 1964), p. 154.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 163.

¹¹M. Avi-Yonah, "The Samaritans' Revolts Against the Byzantine Empire," Eretz-Israel, IV (1956), ix.

¹²John MacDonald, Theology of the Samaritans, (London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 31; cf. Articles on Samaritans in New Standard Encyclopedia, Jewish Encyclopedia, New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia and Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature.

¹³E. Kautzsch, "Samaritans," New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, S.M. Jackson, (ed.), (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), X, p. 185-189.

has already been discussed. The early expansion of the Karaites in the ninth century A. D. took them into Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Babylonia and Persia. The rapid spread was probably due to Sadducean influence still in existence in the Jewish communities.¹⁴

The importance of the Karaites has not gone unheeded. Influenced by Weider's Comparative studies of Karaites and the Dead Sea Scrolls, one scholar has posited the suggestion that Montanism was a Jewish Christian heresy.¹⁵

III. DIVERSITY IN THE DIASPORA

Egypt

Elephantine Colony. In Egypt there existed a body of Jews, originally mercenaries, from the seventh to the fifth century, who "had a temple of Yahweh, whom they worshipped beside the goddesses Aschima and Anat (Anaitis)...[and] swore by Egyptian gods...."¹⁶ Contact of this temple with the temple of Jerusalem and that of the Samaritans has been documented, though

¹⁴Kaufman Kohler, "Karaites," Jewish Encyclopedia, (Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1902), VII, 441; and cf. J. MacDonald, Theology of the Samaritans, p. 33.

¹⁵J. M. Ford, "Was Montanism a Jewish-Christian Heresy?" Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XVII (Oct. 1966), pp. 145-158.

¹⁶W. W. Tarn, Hellenistic Civilization, (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1927), p. 188.

there was uneasiness on the Palestinian side.¹⁷ It is quite ¹⁴⁹
certain that this was a syncretistic group. The group
probably ceased to exist in the fourth century.¹⁸

Leontopolis. Later, another small temple was built at
Leontopolis, founded by Onias IV of the High Priestly line,
dating from B. C. 160 to A. D. 73. It was closed by the
Romans after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. However,
it was always considered very much a subsidiary to the Temple
in Jerusalem and its priests and the Egyptian Jews reckoned
it as such.¹⁹ Its existence was remarkable when considered
against the rigid centralization of sacrificial worship in
Jerusalem.

Therapeutae. The Therapeutae were an ascetic monastic
group very similar to the Essenes. They flourished in Egypt
before the time of Philo, who wrote about them.²⁰

Greek Jews. Philo and other Alexandrians represented the
use of Greek philosophy in application to the Torah. Exegeting

¹⁷S. Kraeling, "Elephantine Papyri," The Interpreter's
Dictionary of the Bible, II, 83-85.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁹E. Schürer, The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ,
(Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1885), Div. II, Vol. 2, pp. 286-288.

²⁰R. K. Harrison, Dead Sea Scrolls, (New York: Harper &
Brothers, 1961), p. 85.

by allegory, they were the forerunners of the Alexandrian schools of gnostics and of the Christian church, e.g., Clement and Origen.²¹ 150

Dositheans. The Dosithean heretics were active among the Samaritans in Egypt.²² The Dositheans were present throughout the Diaspora. There was record of a community of them near Damascus and of other Essene-type communities,²³ e.g. the Covenanters of the Damascus document, a copy of which was found in the Qumran caves, proving a relationship between them and Qumran.²⁴

Babylon

Little was known about Babylonian Jewry prior to the first century before Christ. However, Dura was one example of the impact Hellenism had upon some Jewish communities.²⁵ Another factor which led to diverse culture within Jewry in Asia Major

²¹R. M. Wilson, The Gnostic Problem, (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1958), p. 30ff.

²²J. Bowman, "The Importance of Samaritan Research," The Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society, I (1959), pp. 43-54.

²³B. Z. Lurie, "On The History of the Jewish Community of Damascus," Eretz-Israel, IV (1956), pp. 111-118, vii-viii.

²⁴G. R. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), p. 18.

²⁵Jacob Neusner, A History of the Jews in Babylonia, I. The Parthian Period (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 10.

was the continued existence of descendants of the ten northern tribes around Nisibis.²⁶ Many Jews were receptive to Babylonian gods, e.g., Tammuz,²⁷ and contact with Iranian doctrines did much to stimulate within Judaism the advanced doctrine of angels, etc., which were imported into Palestine. The Qumran Covenanters used an Isaiah scroll in which the Assyrian and Babylonian names were properly vocalized (whereas the Masoretic and Septuagintal texts were not), pointing to contact with Babylonia.²⁸

Rome

"All roads lead to Rome," and the cults appeared sooner or later in the city. A group of Jews are reported to have been expelled from Rome, since they were members of a cult of Sabazios-Jupiter. A tomb in Rome showed an angel of Jewish origin leading the deceased woman into the Fields of the Blessed; yet the tomb owner described himself as "servant of Sabazios."²⁹

Reference has already been made to the difference between certain burial chambers in the catacombs--one apparently liberal and the other conservative.

²⁶Ibid., p. 13. ²⁷Tarn, Hellenistic Civilization, p. 195.

²⁸W. F. Albright, "The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for Biblical Study," Near Eastern Archaeology 5 (Spring-Summer, 1962), p. 3.

²⁹C. Guignebert, The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, p. 242.

Simon Magus, Cerdo, Marcion and Valentinus all were reported as having been in Rome.

Diaspora Hellenistic

The material considered refers to the more exceptional elements of syncretism. And when one adds the effect of living in Hellenic culture, it becomes clear why scholars regarded Diasporic Judaism as essentially Hellenistic. But one geographic area has been reserved for special consideration since it provided a link with early Christianity.

IV. JEWS IN ASIA MINOR

It has already been intimated that there was a considerable population of Jews in Asia Minor (including the islands of Cyprus, Crete, Cos, etc.). Schürer listed over thirty settlements which are known.³⁰ Josephus quoted a letter of Antiochus III (223-187 B.C.) in which this ruler instructed his general in Mesopotamia, Zeuxis by name, to transfer two thousand Jewish families from there to Lydia and Phrygia.³¹ As early as the fourth century B.C., Clearchus of Soli provided evidence for the presence of Jews in Asia Minor.³²

³⁰W. Oesterley, "The Cult of Sabazios: A Study in Religious Syncretism," The Labyrinth, S. H. Hooke, editor, (London: SPCK, 1935), p. 121.

³¹Ibid., p. 125.

³²Ibid., p. 126.

At the turn of the era, then, they were numerous in Asia Minor and were in contact with Palestine. The Temple tax was collected and sent from Asia Minor just as elsewhere. In "62 B.C. L. Valerius Flacius confiscated at Laodicea, Apamea, Adramythium, and Pergamus money intended for Jerusalem."³³ This showed that the tax was collected in Asia Minor, and, incidentally, the amount of money confiscated contributes to the awareness of a considerable Jewish population. "They went on pilgrimages in great numbers, and the pilgrim ships sailed regularly every spring from the Aegean harbours for Caesareia."³⁴ Acts 2:9-11 testifies particularly to the presence in Jerusalem of Jews and proselytes from Asia Minor.

Syncretistic Cults

That there was variety in Jewish worship in Asia Minor is apparent, though there is doubt as to what extent the syncretistic cults of which we have knowledge were the effect of Hellenism upon Judaism or vice versa.³⁵

Yahweh was identified with other gods which seemed to have the same qualities and functions. So Yahweh was named Theos

³³Isidore Levy, "Asia Minor," Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1902), Vol. II, p. 213.

³⁴W. M. Ramsay, The Letters to the Seven Churches (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1905), p. 155.

³⁵R. M. Wilson, The Gnostic Problem, p. 12ff.

Hypsistos and identified with Zeus Hypsistos; the Jewish synagogues in Mysia and at Delos did actually worship Zeus Hypsistos.³⁶ "Sabazios too became a Jewish god from a fancied identity of Lord Sabazios with Lord Sabaoth....A society of Sabazios worshippers is known who also worshipped Hypsistos."³⁷

There were groups with mixed practices and dual loyalties. "The porphyrobaphoi of Hierapolis, who mix practices of entirely Hellenic origin with the observance of the feast of Passover and Pentecost,....The Sabbatists of Cilicia, and the followers of Sambothe at Thyatire were also more or less under the influence of Judaism."³⁸ Jews held positions of priesthood in Phrygian cults, e.g., Alexander, Serveria Cornuta, and Julia Severa. Julia Severa was a High Priestess of the imperial cult while her husband was a ruler of the synagogue.³⁹ Evidently there was a group of Jews in Smyrna who may have lost real identity, as the writer of Revelation refers to them as "them who say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9).⁴⁰

³⁶W. W. Tarn, Hellenistic Civilization, p. 196.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Levy, "Asia Minor," p. 212.

³⁹Oesterley, "The Cult of Sabazios: A Study in Religious Syncretism," p. 128; and Wilson, The Gnostic Problem, p. 14.

⁴⁰Note this could be an antithetical reference to unbelieving Jews as opposed to the Christian Church which includes true Jews (cf. Charles, I.C.C., I, 56, ad. loc.).

Of real significance was the evidence of legends in Phrygia of Noah and Enoch,⁴¹ because both figures prominently in apocalyptic literature. In fact, a legend of Noah also appears in the Book of Enoch itself. Judaism had a cultural impact on Asia Minor, especially Phrygia.

Magic

Paul encountered representatives of Jewish magic in Asia Minor. In Ephesus vagabond Jews, exorcists, used the name of Jesus to try and cast out demons; of such were the sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest (Acts 19:13, 14). In this case, it is noteworthy that the Jews were peripatetics, i.e., of a group similar to the wandering prophets and philosophers; they had interest in the use of a Divine Name in magic; and there was a relationship between magic and the sons of a Jewish priest. In Crete Paul was opposed by a Jewish magician Elymas Bar Jesus (Acts 13:6-8), in which situation "sorcerer" (Μάγος) was equated with "false prophet."

Sectaries

Paul himself claimed to be a "Pharisee a son of a Pharisee." So this sect was present in the Asia Minor Diaspora.

The strong probability of a Sadduceean element, evidenced by Karaite and Samaritan presence in Asia Minor, has already

⁴¹E. Schürer, "Diaspora," Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, pp. 91-109.

been discussed and, of course, the presence of Samaritans intimated that Dositheans also were present as a possible link with Jewish non-conformity.

That the Essenes were present is more difficult to prove, and the evidence is tenuous, yet not to be ignored. The presence of Essene-type communities in Syria was noted by Philo,⁴² and their presence in and near Damascus has already been mentioned, showing that the communities had certainly moved northwards.⁴³ However, the principal evidence that Lightfoot evinced for the presence of an allied development of Judaism, more likely Hemerobaptist than Essene,⁴⁴ was the Sibylline Oracle which forms the fourth book in the existing collection.⁴⁵ Its authorship was undoubtedly Jewish, the location of writing Asia Minor, and the date of authorship A.D. 80.⁴⁶ The earlier critics regarded it as Christian; however, it may be considered safe to say that now it is accepted as Jewish.⁴⁷

⁴²J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (London: Macmillan & Co., 1904), p. 92.

⁴³F. J. A. Hort, Judaistic Christianity (Cambridge: Macmillan and Co., 1894), p. 128. "There is no tangible evidence for Essenism outside of Palestine." The finding of fragments of the Damascus Zadokite document at Qumran disproves this assertion.

⁴⁴Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 94f.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 94 and notes. ⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 94, 95f.

⁴⁷George G. Fox, "Sibylline Books," Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, (New York: The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Inc., 1943), Vol. IX, p. 525; and J. R. Harris, "Sibylline Oracles," Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, V, 68.

The remaining area of real contention is the question of whether it was authored by a "Normative" Jew or a Sectarian Jew of the Essene brand. Lightfoot identified the writer as perhaps a Hemerobaptist,⁴⁸ which Hort tentatively accepted, though he would not recognize any association between Hemerobaptists and Essenes.⁴⁹ Others who favored such an identification were Ewald, Hilgenfeld, and Delauney.⁵⁰

The argument for such identification lay in the rejection of temples, altars and blood sacrifices, stress on grace before meals, and baptism.⁵¹ However, according to Hirsch, Krauss and Moffatt, the reference to temples, altars, and sacrifices was in regard to heathen practice; the grace said before meals was a normal Jewish custom; and the baptism signified was that of a proselyte to Judaism.⁵² Against the argument that the reference was only to heathen sacerdotalism,

⁴⁸Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, p. 95, Note 1.

⁴⁹F. J. A. Hort, Judaistic Christianity (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1894), p. 128.

⁵⁰S. A. Hirsch, "The Jewish Sibylline Oracles," The Jewish Quarterly Review, 2 (1890), p. 423; and Hort, Ibid.

⁵¹M. S. Terry, The Sibylline Oracles (New York: Hurt & Eaton, 1890), p. 114, iv., Lines 29-34; p. 122, Bk. iv, Lines 208-209.

⁵²Hirsh, op. cit., p. 423f; and Samuel Krauss, "Sibyl," The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1902) II, 322; and James Moffatt, "Sibylline Oracles," Dictionary of the Apostolic Church (New York: C. Scribner & Sons, 1922), Vol. II, p. 184.

158

others have pointed out a tendency in Diasporic Judaism (and the Sectarian baptising nonconformity discussed in a previous chapter) towards the synagogue and away from the temple.⁵³

The Dead Sea Scroll discoveries and Mandaean studies have provided new evidence towards identifying the author as an Essenic-type Jew. The Pharisees said grace before and after meals whereas the Covenanters and Essenes said it just before the meal, as did the Sibyl.⁵⁴ A very telling element is in the matter of baptism. The Sibylline Oracle, line 160, reads, "Ye miserable mortals, repent; wash in living streams your entire frame with its burden of sin."⁵⁵ Jewish proselyte baptism had no reference to flowing waters. A pool or tank was quite sufficient. However, the Mandaeans and Elkasaites emphasized baptism in running water,⁵⁶ and the Qumran Covenanters, in spite of the apparent use of tanks for ablutions, had a curious phrase referring to sanctification by running waters (I QS. 3:4,5, 9). The Mandaeans used the term "living water"⁵⁷

⁵³Foakes Jackson, F. J. and Kirsopp Lake, "Varieties of Thought and Practice in Judaism," The Beginning of Christianity (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 93.

⁵⁴J. R. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, p. 83.

⁵⁵Samuel Krauss, "Baptism," Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1902), II, 500.

⁵⁶E. R. Drower, The Secret Adam (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), p. 93.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 61.

and used the word "Jordan" with the meaning of "living" or "flowing" water.⁵⁸

This all points to a strong connection between the Sibylline Oracle and sectarian Judaism, one of the sects closely similar to the Essenes.⁵⁹

⁵⁸E. Yamauchi, "The Present Status of Mandaean Studies," Journal of Near Eastern Studies XXV (April, 1966), p. 95ff.

⁵⁹B. Noack, "Are the Essenes Referred to in the Sibylline Oracles?" Studia Theologica XVII (2, 1963), pp. 90-102. This author answers in the negative. Criticism may be made on the following basis:

1/ Books III, IV and V are treated as of common origin, this cannot be done.

2/ If such were the case, the evidence for sectarianism would be strengthened not diminished. Book III 573-9 (Terry, 685-712) refers to a group who approves of sacrifice in the temple under good conditions in the future, the Zadokite priest also looked to the restoration of true Temple worship.

3/ On page 97, Noack states that there were so many references to Egypt in Book IV that it must be considered Egyptian. There were only three compared to over twenty referring to Asia Minor and Asia Major.

4/ Re Ablutions, Noack missed the similarity of baptizing in running water and ignored the Mandaean parallel.

5/ Book III, 591-3 (Terry 706-8) referring to morning hand washers, according to Noack, is not found to have real parallel in Essenism. Lightfoot points out that the Hemerobaptists were known for this.

6/ In Chapter V of this thesis, Josephus' comments were noted that Essenes by reason of their studies of the Scriptures and purifications made predictions that came true. If any Jewish group was to write the Sibylline prophetic oracles, it would surely be the Essenes.

Noack's study in the opinion of this writer is very inconclusive and not particularly accurate.

A further factor to consider was the existence of a group of disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus and the presence of Apollos, also a follower of him, who probably became such at Alexandria (Acts 18:19). This fact demonstrates the rapidity with which a Palestinian movement reached the Diaspora and may even provide another slight evidence of links with the Baptist groups of the Jordan Valley and the Qumran dwellers.⁶⁰ Some have said that these were Christians, albeit imperfect Christians.⁶¹ The Gospel of John itself ~~was~~ considered in part to have been written to correct the view that John the Baptist was the Messiah and, according to tradition, it was written at Ephesus. Baptist sectarian tendencies may be seen also in the Apostolic constitutions and the pseudo-Clementines.⁶² The presence of the Jewish sects in Asia Minor, including those involved in "gnosis," esoteric doctrine, would certainly be a fair assumption in the light of the factors considered thus far.

V. GEOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF GNOSTICISM

From the previous chapter it is apparent that there was evidence of a "gnosis" in Judaism which influenced Christianity.

⁶⁰Raymond E. Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles," The Scrolls and the New Testament, K. Stendahl, editor (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 207.

⁶¹Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, p. 400.

⁶²Ibid., p. 401ff; and cf. O. Cullman, The Christology of the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 40ff.

Some have categorized the sources as a Palestinian Jewish Gnosticism, a Samaritan gnosticism, and a Diasporic gnosticism.⁶³ But such a differentiation should be considered a convenience and not as indicating clear-cut tendencies. The main source for gnosticism, according to patristic authorities, was the eastern part of the Mediterranean world. From Asia Minor came Cerinthus, the Naassenes, and possibly the Ophites; from Syria-Palestine, Simon, Saturninus, and Basilides; from Egypt, Basilides again and Valentinus, with possibly a modified form of the Simonian theory, and also some branch of the "Ophite" movement.⁶⁴

All these regions had felt the influence of Hellenism and Persia. More important than this fact, because the whole Mediterranean world was under the impact of Hellenistic syncretism, was the matter that all these places were centers of Jewish Dispersion - of Jewish concentration.⁶⁵

Phrygia in Asia Minor was a seed plot of syncretism. This was the area where the worship of the great Mother had been a factor, influencing seemingly all the religions of that area.⁶⁶ So some have rejected Essene or similar sectarian influence

⁶³L. Goppelt, Jesus, Paul and Judaism (New York: T. Nelson & Sons, 1964), p. 175ff.

⁶⁴R. M. Wilson, The Gnostic Problem, pp. 176-178.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 178.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 166; and cf. W. R. Ramsey, "Asia Minor," Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. V.

upon the Colossians, saying that the syncretistic Jewish Diaspora of Phrygia was responsible for the false teaching.⁶⁷ However, one who suggested this also noted a similarity between the false teaching and the Book of Elchesai, which introduces the wider spectrum of Jewish sects.⁶⁸ Further, the evidence already produced for the false dichotomy of Palestinian Judaism and Diasporic Judaism; the rapidity with which Christianity and the mystery cults spread; the interpenetration of gnostic systems,⁶⁹ and the continued connection between Jews in Asia Minor and Jerusalem does not suggest an isolated or localized phenomenon.⁷⁰

Geographic considerations point toward the influence of Judaism upon the development of false teaching within Christianity.

⁶⁷Goppelt, op. cit., p. 185.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 184, Note 25.

⁶⁹Wilson, The Gnostic Problem, p. 177.

⁷⁰A quotation from the Talmud commonly made to show the disassociation of Phrygia from the Rabbis was "The wives and the baths of Phrygia have separated the ten tribes from Israel." (Quoted by A. T. Robertson, Paul and the Intellectuals; Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959, 145 pp., quote on p. 3). Strong objections have been raised to this identification by Joseph Halevy because the term used in the Talmud for the geographic reference is Prugita. ("Asia Minor," Jewish Encyclopedia New York: Funk & Wagnall Co., 1902, Vol. II, pp. 211-213, ref. on p. 213). The more probable reason for loss of contact was the inroads Christianity made into the Jewish populace, gaining many converts. (W. H. C. Frend, "The Winning of the Countryside," Journal of Ecclesiastical History XVIII (April 1967), pp. 1-14, ref. on p. 2).

VI. CHRISTIANITY INHERITED JEWISH VARIETY

That Christianity inherited the variegated traditions of Judaism is apparent from the historical books of the New Testament. Jesus ministered to multitudes of Galilaeans,⁷¹ Judaeans, Transjordan dwellers, including those of the Ten Greek towns of Decapolis (Matt. 6:25). He saw many Samaritans become His followers (John 4:39). Among His disciples were representatives of the various parties: Simon the Zealot; Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea, representatives of the Sanhedrin; and disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:37). After Pentecost the roll call enlarged to include Pharisees, priests, Hebraists, Hellenists, Diasporic Jews and Proselytes (including God-fearers, those semi-proselytes who were uncircumcised). Cullman suggested that it was the Hellenists,⁷² whereas Black posited it was Hebraists,⁷³ who were the link between the primitive church and sectarian Judaism. Stephen's remarkable repudiation of the Temple was marked by some scholars

⁷¹A North Palestinian or Galilean origin of Christianity has been suggested along with that of Jerusalem. See M. Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 7f.

⁷²O. Cullman, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXIV (December, 1955), pp. 213ff.

⁷³M. Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 75ff.

164

as evidence of the rejection, by some of the Diaspora, of the Temple and Sacrifices as not being true worship.⁷⁴

The church was noted as having been established throughout Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria (Acts 9:11). Damascus and Antioch were named as Christian centers. They were also centers of sectarian Judaism. Jews and Proselytes from Asia, Asia Minor, Egypt, North Africa, and Rome were among the first converts (Acts 2:9-11). Right from the beginning, converts were received into the church from the many sided Judaism of the first century A. D.

The Jews brought with them a rich heritage, viz., the Old Testament. The Scriptures received, Hebrew and Greek, included a larger collection of Jewish holy writings without fixed bounds, of which some were apocalyptic.⁷⁵ The Jewish apocalyptic writings "...and the state of mind that produced them, had a great and formative influence on the minds of the earliest Christians."⁷⁶ Thus esoteric books such as Enoch were influential and used by the early church; e.g. Jude quoted from Enoch and Tertullian regarded it as scripture.⁷⁷ Papias,

⁷⁴Marcel Simon, "Saint Stephen and the Jerusalem Temple," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, .II (Oct. 1951), pp. 127-142.

⁷⁵Albert C. Sundberg Jr., The Old Testament of the Early Church (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. x, 98.

⁷⁶W. O. E. Oesterley, The Jews and Judaism During The Greek Period (London: SPCK, 1941), p. 70, citing Burkett.

⁷⁷R. H. Charles, The Book of Enoch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), p. lxxx IV; see p. LXXXI-XCV for influence on Patristics.

Bishop of Hieropolis (13 miles from Colossae), was influenced by Jewish apocalypticism, and, as he was Bishop, this probably reflected the church's preaching in Phrygia.⁷⁸

From previous arguments it should be considered that Christianity also received gnostic traditions from Judaism. The first problem combatted was the relationship of the law and the gospel, the birth pains due to Christianity's relationship to Judaism. The second problem was that of syncretism, and it should not be considered surprising that it came from the area of Judaism again. The Jews and proselytes to Judaism who entered the church had a background of Jewish books and traditions, thought to be especially honored of God. The Gentiles who entered the church came in contact with this teaching, which would obviously appear legitimate because it was Jewish.

At that point the first generation was certainly more inclined to receive a Jewish syncretism than to attempt syncretizing their own Greek background with their new found faith. This has been termed "overconversion"⁷⁹ and is apparent even today among first generation Christians on the mission

⁷⁸W. H. C. Frend, "The Winning of the Countryside," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, p. 2.

⁷⁹Henry J. Cadbury, "Overconversion in Paul's Churches," The Joy of Study, S. E. Johnson, editor (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 43.

fields. It is the later generations that attempt to form their own theologies and so run the risk of assimilating wrong conceptions.

VII. CHRISTIANITY IN ASIA MINOR

The church grew rapidly in Asia Minor. Most of the churches, after the initial Pauline impact, were further influenced by Johannine type theology. However, the South Galatian cities appeared to be more ascetic, almost encratite in nature, judging by the "Acts of Paul."⁸⁰

The seven churches to whom John wrote in Revelation: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, had the appearance of being leading churches.⁸¹ Ephesus became the prime episcopal see; Smyrna gained leadership on the coast because of Polycarp; Sardis had as Bishop in the late second century Melito, the most important leader of Asia Minor in his day;⁸² Laodicea was the scene of a significant synod, council, and controversy,⁸³ and the other cities also were significant in the early years.⁸⁴

⁸⁰P. Carrington, The Early Christian Church (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), II, 177, 187ff.

⁸¹W. Ward Gasque, Sir William M. Ramsay: Archaeologist and Scholar (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), p. 52.

⁸²Carrington, op. cit., p. 177.

⁸³S. C. Johnson, Laodicea and Its' Neighbors," The Biblical Archaeologist XIII (Feb. 1950), p. 11

⁸⁴Carrington, op. cit., p. 177.

Asia Minor was also the center of those who observed the Paschal anniversary at the same time as the Jews on the 14th Nisan, whether it fell on Friday or not. The champions of this view were Polycarp of Smyrna, Melito of Sardis, Polycrates of Ephesus and probably Claudius Apollinaris of Hieropolis.⁸⁵ This intimate relationship with Jewish practices was widespread throughout Asia Minor.

Meander-Lycus Valley

The churches of the Meander-Lycus Valley seemed to be of particular prominence. Ignatius wrote epistles to Ephesus, Magnesia and Tralles, all of the Meander Valley (The other epistles were addressed to Rome, Philadelphia, Smyrna and Bishop Polycarp). The churches of Laodicea, Colossae and Hieropolis, of the Lycus Valley, were mentioned in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (Col. 1:1, 4:13). In addition to Laodicea, Hieropolis was an important bishopric and Papias was an incumbent of note.⁸⁶

The churches of the Meander and Lycus valleys apparently had a constant problem of Judaizing. For some time converts to Christianity from Judaism probably held a dual membership in synagogue and church. Jews and Christians shared

⁸⁵Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, p. 56.

⁸⁶Johnson, op. cit., p. 12ff.

cemeteries, and the inference was that there was constant intercourse in other ways.⁸⁷ Ignatius in writing to Magnesia warned of danger of relapsing into Judaism⁸⁸ (a Jewish Docetism at that). Jewish apocalypticism permeated the religious atmosphere of the valley.

Papias of Hieropolis, John on Patmos (exiled from Ephesus), and Book IV of the Sibylline Oracles are examples of its effect. The first two were Christian, the third Jewish, and all were related to the Meander-Lycus Valley.⁸⁹ Cerinthus, reportedly of Ephesus, also taught a Jewish millenarianism.⁹⁰

At a council of Laodicea in the fourth century it was found necessary to promulgate warnings against certain tendencies that were apparently prevalent in the district. The canons are as follows:

29 It is not right for Christians to Judaize and abstain from labour on the Sabbath...they should pay respect rather to the Lord's day....

35 It is not right for Christians to abandon the church of God and go away and invoke angels... and hold conventicles....

36 It is not right for priests or clergy to be magicians or enchanters or mathematicians or astrologers, or to make sake guards (phylacteries)....

⁸⁷J. M. Ford, "Was Montanism a Jewish-Christian Heresy?" p. 146.

⁸⁸Johnson, op. cit., p. 18. ⁸⁹Ibid., p. 17.

⁹⁰Jean Danielou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity (Chicago: The Henry Regnery Co., 1964), p. 68.

37 It is not right to receive from Jews or heretics the festive offerings which they send about, nor to join in their festivals.

38 It is not right to receive unleavened bread from the Jews nor to participate in their impieties.⁹¹

"Sabbath," "invocation of angels," magic, Jewish festivals and offerings, "unleavened bread" - these things in the fourth century, of which the church needed warning, bear resemblance to the heresy of the Book of Colossians; and the inclusion of magic brings in the Jewish gnostic element which has been noted as having such close parallel with pagan magic and gnosticism. In fact, Scholem's observations bear repeating that Jewish "gnosis," Gnosticism, Hermetica and Hellenistic magic all showed interrelationship and provide insight for the Council's warnings.

Cerinthus

A strong tradition has placed Cerinthus in Ephesus at the same time as John the Evangelist (Eus. III. 28:6), and Iranaeus gave notice that John's Gospel was written against Cerinthus' heresy (Haer, III, 11, 1). He is recognized as unique in that "he represents a position of transition from Judaistic Ebionism to Gnosticism...."⁹² Some of his teachings were gnostically oriented.

⁹¹Ibid., pp. 65-66.

⁹²A.C. McGiffert, The Church History of Eusebius (Vol I of The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), III, 28, 1; Note 1 ad. loc.

According to the Fathers, Cerinthus taught that the world was created by a power other than the Supreme God (Iren. Adv. Haer I. 26.1) and/or angelic intermediaries (Pseud. Tert. Adv. Omn. Haer. 3). Jesus was born of natural procreation; after His baptism the Christ descended upon Him like a dove and left before he was crucified. He proclaimed the unknown Father (Iren. Adv. Haer 1.26.1) and the Return of the Christ was to His Pleroma (Adv. Haer. III. II.1).⁹³

The above factors emphasized the gnostic tendencies of Cerinthus; however, Judaistic features were also prominent. He taught a particularly materialistic millenarianism (Eus. III, 28.6), insisted on circumcision, denied the virgin birth, attributed creation to angels, stressed the importance of Jewish food-laws,⁹⁴ and kept the Sabbath (Epiph Pan. XXVIII, 5:103). Irenaeus stated that the views of the Ebionites were very similar to Cerinthus' (Adv. Haer. I. 26.1). Along with the denial of the Virgin Birth, the assertion that he only accepted the Gospel of Matthew (Epiph. Pan XXVIII, 5:1-3)

⁹³It is probable that the reference to Pleroma refers to both Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans as both are in the same sentence, even though the information follows the latter name. (cf. Lightfoot, Colossians, p. 110).

⁹⁴J. A. T. Robinson, "The Destination and Purpose of the Johannine Epistles," Twelve New Testament Studies (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1962), p. 135. He cites a statement of Hippolytus preserved in the Commentary on the Apocalypse by Dionysius bar Salibi.

further links him with this Jewish Christian sect. The attributing of the creation of the world to the work of angels was of course, as already discussed, recognized as a heterodox Jewish concept. There was a strong influence upon the Ebionites by Essenism, as recent comparative studies in the Qumran material have pointed out.⁹⁵

Thus Cerinthus (and the Ignatian Epistles) provided a strong link between Gnosticism and Judaism; New Testament heresies and the second century ones; Asia Minor (not only Phrygia) and Jewish non-conformity.

VIII. SUMMARY

The extent of the Jewish Diaspora; the presence of Sectarian Judaism by virtue of Samaritanism, Karaism, Dositheanism, and Essenic-type communities in the Diaspora; the evidence for the syncretistic tendencies of Judaism; the obvious fact that Christianity assimilated Jewish factors; the evidence in Asia Minor for syncretistic Judaism and Christianity; all combine to make a strong chain pointing to a continuity of the syncretistic problem of Judaism and its being assimilated into Christianity. If there happens to be proof in the Epistles, especially of Paul, for the presence

⁹⁵J. A. Fitzmyer, "The Qumran Scrolls, the Ebionites, and Their Literature," The Scrolls and the New Testament, K. Stendahl, editor (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 231.

of a Jewish syncretistic gnosticism, then it must be taken into consideration in the study of other New Testament books and in the understanding of early Christianity.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW STANDARD: CONTINUITY BUT CONFRONTATION

When Judaism was faced with Jesus, it was, at first unknowingly, faced with a radical new demand of God. It was faced with God Himself in the flesh.

The ministry of Jesus reflected not the polemic within the Christian Church, but a new confrontation of truth within Judaism in lineal descent of the prophetic message. His message constituted a new and final call within the covenant relationship of Israel with her God. Therefore, something must be said of Jesus' claims and confrontation with the parties within Judaism.

In historical considerations, however, the New Standard was first declared in the preaching of the primitive church. Its call was to identify with Jesus Christ, God in flesh, crucified, risen, and present in the church in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Attention will be given to Jesus' ministry and disputes with the sects, the New Standard proclaimed by the primitive church, and the early confrontations with Judaism and Judaizers.

I. MINISTRY OF JESUS

Jesus, in His ministry, faced the major sects and denounced them or disenchanted them by His behavior and teachings.

Zealots

He discouraged militant apocalyptists and Zealots by refusing earthly kingship (John 6:14), by his humble appearance, and by his acceptance of Roman rule (implied in the saying "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," Matthew 22:21).

Herodians

The Herodians were grouped by Mark and Matthew with the Pharisees in one attempt to confute Jesus (Mark 12:13; Matthew 22:16), and were in upon the counsels to destroy Him (Mark 3:6). Jesus warned His disciples against the leaven (doctrine) of the Pharisees and Herod (Mark 3:15); some manuscripts read Herodians instead of Herod. Tentative identifications suggested the Herodians as supporters of Herod, possibly the political party that was Hellenist, and, by virtue of the parallel passage to Mark 8:15 in Matthew 16:6, as Sadducees.¹

Sadducees

The Sadducees opposed Jesus on the matter of the resurrection, and being refuted by Him (Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18ff; Mark 20:27ff), were identified with the chief priests in one segment of the opposition that eventually destroyed Jesus (Matthew 27:20, 41). In this group belonged the

¹S. Sandmel, "Herodians," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 594-595.

175

corrupt priests and elders, who condemned Jesus, lied about Him to obtain His death, and vilified Him on the Cross (Matthew 27:20, 41; Mark 15:11; John 19:6).

Pharisees

The principal opponents of Jesus were the Pharisees and the closely allied group of scribes (lawyers).

Jesus opposed their use of oral tradition, Halakah, in the interpretations of the Law (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:5); he explicitly showed how such an interpretation often defeated the purpose of the Law (Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13) and charged that much of the scribal casuistry was merely to delimit their own obligations.² He opposed their interpretation of the laws of purity (Mark 7:1-13) and, in the Sermon on the Mount, He set aside many of their teachings (Matthew 5). He even said that if one's righteousness did not exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, one would be lost (Matthew 5:20).

He indicted the Scribes and Pharisees as being hypocrites; of loving prominence; of false piety; of teaching and not practicing; of heaping burdens on the people and thus being a hindrance; of proselyting; of inverted values; of external and not internal religion; and of tithing finances and not majoring on the qualities of love, justice, faith, etc. (Matthew 6; 23:3-36; Luke 11:42-52).

²L. Goppelt, Jesus, Paul and Judaism (New York: T. Nelson & Sons, 1964), p. 60.

However, it was in their rejection of His Person (John 5:63) that the main opposition lay, illustrated by His re-interpretation of the purpose of the Sabbath (Mark 3:4ff). Any understanding of Jesus' position towards Pharisaic legalism which does not take into account His Messianic consciousness and His claims will fail completely to understand the essential antithesis.³

The Kingdom is Come

There was a continuity with the message of the Old Testament in Christ's proclamation.

...The exhortation both of Jesus and John the Baptist: Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, can only be understood as part of the great prophetic, eschatological tradition of old Israel....The New Element...was...that they proclaimed its being at hand.⁴

However, in Christ's preaching of the Kingdom of God there was a radical demand for love and for reliance on God.⁵ This radical demand was based on His own person. He was the auto-basileia, the Kingdom has come in the person of Jesus Christ - the eschaton has come in Christ.⁶

³Ibid., p. 61.

⁴H. N. Ridderbos, When the Time Had Fully Come (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans' Publishing Company, 1957), p. 14.

⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁶Ibid., p. 16, 17.

Nevertheless, until His resurrection, there was a tension between revelation and mystery, between eschatological greatness and human weakness.⁷ This hidden greatness of Jesus Christ was the subject of the gospels,⁸ because only after the Resurrection and Pentecost did the church become dynamized to fulfill the concepts that Christ preached, and to declare openly Jesus Christ. Jesus' claim to be "I am" (John 8:58), to "forgive sins" (Mark 2:5), to be "Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28) constituted "...a demand for a definite attitude towards His own person,"⁹ which the Pharisees met by deciding to kill Him (Mark 3:6). The Law was not set aside but re-asserted in a new total demand for obedience by following Jesus.¹⁰

Jesus' Warnings

Jesus warned His disciples against the "leaven" of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herod (Mark 8:7; Matthew 16:12). The use of the word "leaven" illustrated Jesus' warning against the insidious quality of false doctrine. Certainly Sadducees could have been the first to give trouble within the church concerning belief in the physical resurrection even prior to

⁷Ibid., p. 16.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Goppelt, Jesus, Paul and Judaism, p. 63.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 63ff.

Greek opposition. The insufficiency of notice regarding the Herodians compels suspension of judgment.

The warning against the Pharisees pointed to the real antithesis of Law and Gospel which found later expression in the Book of Romans, viz., the idea that salvation came through keeping the law and that without rebirth man is capable of saving himself.¹¹ The Pharisees were the chief exponents of the Law. The Sadducees and the other sects were also involved in legal considerations, but it was obvious that Jesus' main target in legal interpretations was the Pharisee.

Jesus not only warned against the doctrine of the sects, He also warned against false prophets and, in reference to the end time, he warned of false prophets and false Christs. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told how to identify false prophets - they would be disguised as genuine but could be identified by their fruits. Obedience is the criterion of devotion and not voiced piety or even outstanding spiritual gifts. The gifts of prophecy, exorcism, and miracles may not be evidence of genuineness. Therefore, exercise (or seemingly so) of the gifts of the Spirit is no sign of the genuine

¹¹Hugo Odeberg, Pharisaism and Christianity (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 104. However, criticism should be made of Odeberg's interpretation of the ideals of Pharisaism prior to the destruction of the temple by reference to Rabbinics, because the school of Hillel, emphasizing liberal interpretations, won over the strict Shammaites after that time and dominated the literary production.

prophet (Matthew 7:15-23). Jesus drew on the imagery of the Old Testament by identifying himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) in contradistinction of the hireling shepherd (10:12, 13), who was more concerned with his own safety than that of the flock when the wolves attacked.

Care must be exercised that one who is doing the will of God is not opposed. When the disciples determined to stop others who were not immediate followers of Jesus from exorcising demons and healing people in the name of Christ, Jesus stopped them saying, "...He that is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:38-40; Luke 9:49, 50). This incident also revealed an unorthodox ministry in the background of the gospels which leads one to speculate as to how much this kind of situation was prevalent in the church.

Jesus also warned that before He would return again there would be false prophets and false Christs who would claim to be Him, and would have miraculous abilities. They would make predictions as to the location of the parousia (suggesting deserted or secret places) and relate its imminence to their own presence in the world (Matthew 24:4, 5, 24-26; Luke 21:8; Mark 13:21, 22).

Probably the groups who should be considered as the false teachers in Jesus' time were the Scribes and Lawyers and Pharisees. These were those who had appointed themselves to interpret the Law to the masses. Theirs was the threefold

capacity of judges, teachers and jurists.¹² They were the lineal descendants of the false teachers of the Old Testament, both priest and scribe. Their teaching was the interpretation of the Law and the indictment was casuistry, hypocrisy, and rejection of Jesus.

II. THE NEW STANDARD

The primitive church very quickly established the New Standard. The New Covenant and terms were announced immediately after Pentecost. Various analyses of the apostolic gospel which was proclaimed before our Gospels were written down, have produced the outline of the Kerygma, i.e., the proclamation of God's Good News uttered to men in Jesus Christ.¹³ The two main sources were the passages in St. Paul where he presented the common doctrine of the primitive church; e.g., Romans 1:2b, 10:9; I Corinthians 11:23ff, 15:3ff and the early sermons in Acts.¹⁴ The substance was somewhat as follows:

"The prophecies are fulfilled, and the New Age has dawned.

The Long-expected Messiah, born of David's line has come.

He is Jesus of Nazareth who, after John's baptism,

¹²R. H. Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 53.

¹³A. M. Hunter, Interpreting the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951), pp. 34, 35; Contrary to the Kerygmatic theologians, who believe that the Kerygma was the preaching of the early church not necessarily of the Apostles themselves, the position of this thesis is that the Kerygma was the message of Jesus and the Apostles recorded in synoptic form.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 35.

did mighty works by God's power
died for our sins;
rose from the dead;
was exalted to God's right hand;
and will come again as judge.

Therefore, let all who hear, repent, and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins."¹⁵

The new standard was related to Jesus Christ, replacing the old standard. The new covenant was in the blood of Jesus Christ, replacing the old. The monotheism of Israel now incorporated within it the Mediator between God and man, the announcement of the revelation of the same in the flesh, and the presence of the divine Paraclete in the world since the Ascension of Jesus. The new Torah lifted the old into the realm of motivation, into the realm of love. The power to keep the law was provided by the presence of the Paraclete in the life of the Christian.

Such was the knowledge in the early Christian of the historical truth of the Christian Gospel and the existential realities that any falsity related to the "Good news" had to be combatted:

- I. They all had a tremendous sense of the overwhelming Moral Perfection of God. Today, when to many people God is a vague benevolence with about as much moral authority as Father Christmas, this may strike a strange, and possibly salutary

¹⁵Ibid.

note. The terrific 'fuss' made about sin and salvation, and the insistence on the only safe approach to God being through Christ, are both due to this acute sense of the peril of a sinful being coming within range as it were, of the blazing light and purity of God. God by His very Nature, must mean instant destruction to all evil, and whereas all religions attempt 'bridgeheads' toward Him, it is only through Christ that a real and safe bridge has been built between man, who has morally failed and God, the incredibly active and powerful Source of all Life, Love, Goodness, Truth and Beauty.

The only safe approach to, and the only means of living in spiritual union with, such a power lies in Christ-God-become-Man. Without special privilege, power or defense, Christ defeated Evil and then, overcoming a revulsion that man can hardly begin to imagine, He deliberately allowed Himself as Representative Man to experience in Person the ultimate consequence of Evil. These early Christians can hardly find words to express their awed appreciation of the free, but costly Bridge that was built for Man by this Act of God.

- II. In view of the above conviction we can hardly be surprised to find in these writers a condemnation of 'false teachers.' This condemnation may strike us at first as odd and even un-Christian. We commonly suppose that all roads of the human spirit, however divergent, eventually lead home to the Celestial Benevolence. But if we were seriously to think that they do not, that false roads in fact diverge more and more until they finally lead right away from God, then we can at any rate sympathize with what may seem to us a narrow attitude. For example, an 'un-orthodox' view of Christ which really means that the Bridge is still unbuilt was anathema to these men who were sure of the truth, and had in many cases known Christ personally. It is at least possible that our 'tolerance' has its roots in inner uncertainty or indifference.¹⁶

¹⁶J. B. Phillips, Letters to Young Churches (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960), pp. xi, xii.

Moral impurity was as much condemned by the church as by Judaism, but the realization was also present that doctrinal deviation eventually leads to ethical deterioration (I Corinthians 15:33; Titus 2:1ff). To subvert Christology, especially, was to destroy the truth of Christianity and eventually lead to its decadence.

The New Standard proclaimed by the primitive church became as radical as the demand by the Old Testament. "Either Baal or Yahweh!" became Christ versus Mammon or Belial, Law versus Grace, and one mediator against many. Jews who became Christians and still observed the Law had to recognize with Peter:

"Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in like manner as they." (Acts 15:10, 11).

Later, Paul was to say "that after the way which they [the Jews] call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers...." (Acts 24:14). A break with Judaism was not necessary in becoming a Christian, as the Apostles, especially James, demonstrated. Rather, unbelieving Judaism forced Christianity out in reaction to the radical demand they faced in the preaching of Christ. The Christians could not compromise their message, so they left.

There is a renewed emphasis in Biblical scholarship on the thematic unity of the Scriptures.

"The main theme of the Bible is the covenant-relation between God and man....First with the Israelites, later in the person of His incarnate Son, He inaugurated a new covenant with the New Israel, Membership of which consisted of all who accept Jesus as the Christ and the Saviour."¹⁷

"The God who became present in the Person Jesus Christ is the God who was present in the concrete realities of the people Israel....The Christian affirms that the God of the Old Testament is our God and that Israel's life story is, in a profound sense, the story of our life."¹⁸

Some would even say that there has always been a true church and a false church. In the Old Testament the true church was represented by the Remnant and in the New Testament the Remnant were those of the Jewish descent who accepted Christ. The rest, unbelievers, were the continuing false church.¹⁹ The important fact was that just as there was a continuity of truth, so error was always a possibility as an obstacle to truth. Yet the very existence of error only served to stimulate advocacy of truth.

¹⁷R. V. G. Tasker, The Old Testament in the New (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), p. 13.

¹⁸Bernard W. Anderson, (ed.), "The New Covenant and the Old," The Old Testament and Christian Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 225-242.

¹⁹H. A. Hanke, From Eden to Eternity (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Press, 1960), 196 pp.; and cf. Goppelt, Jesus, Paul, and Judaism, p. 151ff.

III. THE EARLY CONFRONTATIONS OF THE STANDARD

Judaism

The early confrontation of this New Standard took place within the framework of Judaism. In the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, it took some decades before there was complete severance. When Paul arrived in Rome, he was able to converse with the Jews. The destruction of the Temple, the Council of Jamnia, and the re-grouping of forces around the Rabbis, especially the Patriarchs, had to take place before Judaism really established the separation.

The preaching of the Apostles encountered opposition from Sadducees and Priests, because they preached the resurrection from the dead in Jesus (Acts 4:1). Summoned before the Sanhedrin, they were charged not to preach in the name of Jesus and then were released. However, after the continued advance of the new faith, the High Priest and Sadducees again put them in prison (5:17). Miraculously released, they were summoned before the Council again and at this time Gamaliel, one of the Pharisees, counseled prudence in persecuting the Christians for fear that unwittingly the Council might be working against God (5:33-39). So once again they were let go after being beaten and charged not to speak in the Name of Jesus.

The real confrontation came when Stephen made his Apology, his Defence, before the Sanhedrin (Chapter 7).²⁰ It would appear that Stephen denied the validity of the temple and accused the rulers, i.e., chief priests, Sadducees, and Pharisees, of killing Jesus. He likened them to the forefathers who persecuted the prophets (in this same manner, Jesus had accused the Pharisees). Stephen was stoned, and after this, persecution really came upon the church.

From this point on, opposition from the Jews constituted more of a problem from without, demanding apologetics rather than polemics. Once the Jews rejected the message of the Christian missionaries, they became opponents. Some particular Jews and congregations reacted more violently than others. Saul became a vigorous opponent (8:3, 9:1). Only his confrontation with Jesus Christ caused His change.

Paul's strategy was to go first to the Jews in a city, and the Jews soon separated into the believers and disbelievers. The "disobedient" Jews of Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14) and Iconium (14:2) followed Paul to Lystra (14:19) to cause trouble. Similarly, the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica (17:5; I Thessalonians 1:14ff) followed Paul to Berea (17:10). He encountered trouble with disbelieving Jews

²⁰F. F. Bruce, The Defence of the Gospel in the New Testament (Grand Rapids; Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959), p. 21ff.

at Corinth who tried to have him convicted before the pro-consul, who did not recognize any distinction between Jews and Christians (Acts 18:5-17).

Even though there was opposition, it was apparent that not only the Jewish-Christians at Jerusalem, but Paul and others, were conscious of still being Jews; e.g., Paul before the Council said, "I am a Pharisee, a son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6), and he referred to Christianity as a sect of the Jews when speaking before Felix, ("after the way which they [the Jews] call a sect...." (Acts 24:14). So the relationship between Jews and Jewish Christians continued, though uncomfortable.

Nomistic Judaizers

The first main problem within the ranks of the church arose out of the relationship of Jewish Christians to Gentile Christians, culminating in the question of Circumcision and Law.

Peter encountered it first after being directed by the Holy Spirit to the house of Cornelius, where the Holy Spirit enacted another Pentecost. Jewish Christians, "they that were of the circumcision," argued with Peter for having eaten with uncircumcised men (Acts 11:3), the principle in contention being the Law of Purity. Peter settled this by reciting the dealings of the Holy Spirit with himself and Cornelius (Acts 11). The problem was to arise again and plague Paul and the other missionaries.

Some time after Paul and Barnabas had completed their first missionary journey, a group of teachers from Judaea taught at Antioch that circumcision "after the custom of Moses" was necessary to salvation (Acts 15:1). Paul and Barnabas and others went to Jerusalem to have the matter settled. There, a group who were in the church, supported the position of the opponents of Paul. These were "of the sect of the Pharisees" (15:5). They enlarged upon the position by saying not only circumcision but the keeping of the law of Moses (presumably interpreted by Halakah) was necessary (Acts 15:5).

The decision of the church in Jerusalem was that Gentiles were not to be so troubled; only idolatry, fornication and eating blood were forbidden (15:20, 24).²¹ Apparently one of the reasons for these prohibitions was that the Jewish and the Gentile Christians could fellowship together.²² James, in his summation, went on to say that Torah could be heard expounded in every city on the Sabbath (15:21), so that any Jewish Christian could attend both places, observing the Sabbath and the Lord's Day.²³

²¹K. Lake, "The Apostolic Council of Jerusalem," The Beginning of Christianity; F. J. Foakes, Jackson, and Kirsopp Lake, editors (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), V, 205ff.

²²Ibid., p. 206ff; and F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of Acts, (New International Commentary, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1955), Comm. on 15:21, p. 311.

²³Bruce, Ibid., Com. on 15:21, p. 312; and Carter and Earle, The Acts of the Apostles (The Evangelical Commentary, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), Com. on 15:21, p. 216ff.

It was noted that Paul always considered himself a Jew and was willing to show the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, by undertaking a vow, that he observed the law and did not teach Jewish converts to disregard it (Acts 21:21).

Two letters of Paul's were related to this problem of circumcision and law versus grace and liberty.

Galatians. A letter written in the heat of controversy, it was closely related to the Apostolic Council. Interpreters have differed, as to whether or not in Galatians Chapter 2, Paul is discussing the Council meeting recorded in Acts 15.²⁴ Since the second century, scholars have held that "Judaizers" from Jerusalem had penetrated the Galatian churches, and had striven to convince the Christians that circumcision and observance of the Law were necessary.²⁵ The Marcionite prologue to Galatians stated that "the Galatians...were tempted by false apostles to turn to the Law and circumcision."²⁶

After his usual greeting in Christ, Paul quickly engaged the problem. He warned that any who preached a different Gospel were not to be listened to; he even pronounced anathema

²⁴W. G. Kummel, editor, Introduction to the New Testament, founded by Dave Feine and Johannes Behm (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 195ff.

²⁵Ibid., p. 194.

²⁶Ibid., p. 174.

upon those who preached any Gospel contrary to that which he preached (Gal. 1:6-9). Then, describing his own zeal in the traditions of the Jews (1:11-14), he went on to elaborate upon his conversion and the revelation of the Gospel given him (1:15-23), so defending his apostolic office. He described a conflict with Judaizers (2:4) which, after a Council in Jerusalem, extended to Antioch (2:11-14), where Judaizers from Judaea were refusing on the basis of purity laws to eat with Gentile Christians, and Peter and Barnabas had conceded to them.

From this springboard, Paul went on to contrast bondage under Law with liberty through the Spirit by faith (Chapter 3: 1-4:31). "Faith, not works, obtained salvation; justification was not connected with the fulfilment of the Law but with the promise."²⁷ The Law was but a schoolmaster, tutoring the youthful novices in righteousness that they might be brought to faith in Christ. Those in Christ lived above the Law not by obeying it but by the leadership of the Spirit. Thus, the final section (5:1--6:10), exhorted the Galatians to seek freedom from the lusts of the flesh through walking by the Spirit. Paul was opposing teachers who demanded circumcision (Gal. 5:3, 11, 6:12, 15; 1:3ff), probably as a sign of acknowledging the law (Gal. 4:21) and of keeping the various festivals and Sabbaths (4:10). Paul seemed to intimate that he had told them before that circumcision demanded keeping the

²⁷Ibid., p. 191.

whole law (Gal. 5:3). The recognition of the Law, according to these teachers, was supposed to be an addition to faith in Christ, a perfecting of the believer (Gal. 3:2-5). They disparaged Paul's knowledge of the total message of the Gospel (Gal. 1:11ff, 18ff). They seem to be the "false brethren" in Antioch who caused trouble there (Gal. 2:4ff; Acts 15:1, 5), the nomistic Judaizers from Palestine.²⁸

The Galatians were much intrigued by this teaching (Gal. 3:1) and seemed ready to accept it. It spared the Jewish Christians a break with the Jews, removed the problem of Jews eating with Gentiles, and gave contact with a historical religion legally tolerated by the Roman government.²⁹ Paul implied that both the Jewish Christian teachers and the Gentile were fleeing from the Cross of Christ. The Cross meant that the believer was crucified to the Law and the world (Gal. 2:19b, 6:14).³⁰

Some, in the light of Galatians 5:15, expressed the belief that Paul battled on two fronts against Judaizers and antinomian "spirituals." However, this verse is too vague to furnish evidence of another party.³¹ Others have tried to bring the

²⁸Goppelt, Jesus, Paul and Judaism, p. 126.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹E. F. Harrison, Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 256.

two ideas together by suggesting that the opponents were syncretistic Jews or Gnostic Jewish Christians.

Schmithals based his thesis upon the following argumentation:

(a) Judaizers did not reproach Paul for dependence upon the primitive apostles.

(b) As opponents of the Gentile mission, Judaizers could not promote the Gentile mission.

(c) Paul was the first to draw to the attention of the Galatians that if circumcised they had to keep the entire Law. (5:3; Gnostic circumcision never obliged one to keep the Mosaic Law).

(d) The observance of particular times in connection with the worship of angels (4:9ff) is, like the above, understandable only from Gnostic presuppositions.³²

However, Kummel refuted the above statements by saying that the opponents demanded the acceptance of the Law (the verses he quoted were not very conclusive, however).³³ Gal. 5:3 was a reiteration, not a new fact, of the necessity to keep the entire Law; symbolic circumcision was not discussed, i.e., a release from the lordship of the flesh; the times and seasons were not recognizable with certainty but were more likely related to the Law.³⁴

The opponents were Jewish Christians who were true to the law. Many scholars would say that they had Gnostic

³²Kummel, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 194.

³³Ibid., p. 194.

³⁴Ibid., p. 195.

features.³⁵ The crux was the interpretation of στοιχῆα the "elements" of bondage (4:3, 9), and whether the reference to those addressed, as having served "them that by nature are no Gods," (4:8) means "angels" or "idols." Certainly, the tone of the epistle seemed to be antilegalistic, and, rather than resisting heretics, the last two chapters dealt with the problem of how a non-legal gospel was yet ethical, by linking Christians with the leadership of the Spirit.³⁶

Romans.³⁷ By the time Paul wrote the Book of Romans, he considered his missionary task in the Eastern Mediterranean finished (at least for the time being). He wrote not in the passion of debate or rebuke, but with a reasoned argument. The argument was based on the thesis that "justification is by faith" (Rom. 1:17), and the treatment is an interpretation of the supercession of law by the gospel of faith.

This was only in part a summa of Paul's theology, for it had in mind the relation of Jews and Gentiles not only in Chapters 9--11, but throughout the whole letter.³⁸ In Chapters

³⁵Ibid., p. 194.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Goppelt, Jesus, Paul and Judaism, pp. 134-167; and Ibid., p. 216-226.

³⁸R. M. Grant, Introduction to the New Testament (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 189.

1--3 Paul intimated that the Jew as well as the Greek was concluded under sin. In Chapter 4, circumcision was proved a sign of blessing and not a condition. Chapter 7 dealt with the "existential anthropological form which sin takes when brought to a head by the Law."³⁹ Chapter 8 then concluded the doctrinal section, dealing with Justification by describing the work of the Spirit.

In Chapters 1--8, Paul interpreted the position of the Jew from the standpoint of enlightenment, which was why many Jewish commentators protested especially at the rendering of Romans 7.⁴⁰ "The full gravity and despair of existence under the Law, therefore, does not dawn upon a man until he is under the gospel."⁴¹ So Paul was not merely combatting the Judaizers, he was expressing the core of the gospel "which depicts that gospel as the goal of Old Testament redemptive history and the annulment of Judaism."⁴²

However, in Chapters 9--11 Paul went on to describe the reason why part of Israel had rejected; to assume that ultimately there was hope for this group because of the Election, the promise to the Patriarchs; and to point out that the Jews who had believed were the Remnant of grace.

³⁹Goppelt, op. cit., p. 139.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 137ff.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 145.

⁴²Ibid., p. 147.

So "Romans stands at the center of the primitive history of the church as the conclusive and most comprehensive directive on the question of Christianity and Judaism."⁴³

IV. SUMMARY

The New Standard, a matter of relationship to Jesus Christ, when proclaimed by Jesus Himself received opposition from the legalists; in the primitive church, it occasioned the decision that the Law was in subordination to the Gospel. The validity of the Law was not negated; rather its function as a "schoolmaster" was recognized and the continuing value for the "true Jew" was made plain. Faith in Jesus Christ had to be established as the central factor of Christianity and not merely an adjunct or an embellishment of the legal means of grace under the Old Covenant. There was both continuity and discontinuity. The prophecies were fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ; love fulfilled the law and the New Covenant was the ideal of which the Old Covenant and its features were the shadow. Yet the reaction to the demand for faith in the person of Christ, as against attempts to make one's own salvation through works, formed the essential divisive factor that split Judaism. The Righteousness of God, the core

⁴³Ibid., p. 167.

theological concept of the Old Testament, was communicated to man by faith in Jesus Christ. The goal of Ancient Israel and of Judaism, to be righteous, was fulfilled. Yet Jesus was rejected of His own.⁴⁴

So Romans and Galatians are the continuing witness to the ineffectuality of salvation by works. These books interpret the despair of existence under such a system and compare this to the authentic existential reality received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER X

JEWISH.GNOSTICISM: THE INITIAL CONFLICT WITH SYNCRETISM

The conflict regarding law and grace was still an issue when Paul collided with the error that has haunted truth through the centuries - syncretism. Goppelt remarked, "Surprisingly enough, the most dangerous threat from syncretism came into the church first of all from Judaism."¹ However, as has been pointed out elsewhere using the term of Cadbury, the Gentile converts were "overconverted" in Pauline churches and therefore any appraisable false influence would no doubt come from assimilating too much of the Jewish background, especially that which already had made concessions to Hellenistic influence.

If one were to deal chronologically with these matters, the possibilities of the presence of Gnosticism in the Thessalonian Epistles, the brief notice in Romans and Philippians, and the opposition in the Corinthian letters should be dealt with first. But, in the light of the stronger evidence in Asia Minor, it is proposed to establish the presence of Jewish Gnosticism in New Testament times by studying the Epistle to the Colossians, the Pastoral Letters and the Johannine Epistles. Colossians has been emphasized because the heresy was delineated somewhat better than in the other

¹L. Goppelt, Jesus, Paul and Judaism (New York: T. Nelson & Sons, 1964), p. 168.

books, and the historical background was quite conclusive in the light of exegesis. The others gain strength from this identification.

I. THE COLOSSIAN HERESY

Apparently this false teaching did not arise within the congregation. Paul was full of joy at their faith and condition of spiritual life (Col. 1:3-8, 2:5). So the false teaching did not really have success (2:4, 8, 20), although in 2:20 the readers were spoken of as being "burdened with regulations,"² or being subjected to ordinances. Paul did not berate the Colossians as he did the Galatians, nor was he as vehement or pointed in speaking of a particular group of teachers.

It is generally agreed that the language of Colossians (and Ephesians) differed from the earlier epistles, because Paul countered the false teaching in mystical terms comparable to those used by its exponents. So an analysis of the mystical language would provide some insight into the problem. Fortunately however, in Chapter 2, Paul delineated the main features of the heresy, especially in verses 8-23.

²W. G. Kummel, editor, Introduction to the New Testament, founded by Paul Feine and Johannes Behm (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 239.

The logical arrangement of the argument as analyzed by Lightfoot was very illuminating in bringing together the salient features:

Beware lest any man make spoil of you through philosophy and vain deceit after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world...ye were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands....And you...did He quicken,...blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against you....Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of a holy day or a new moon or a sabbath....Let no man beguile you of your prize in a self-imposed humility and service of angels....If you died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why...are ye subject to ordinances...which things have a show of wisdom in self-imposed service and humility and hard treatment of the body, but are of no value against indulgence of the flesh.³

A classification of the elements of the "Colossian error" into logically Jewish and non-Jewish categories made by Moule was as follows:⁴

I. Exclusively Jewish Elements:

- | | | | |
|----|---------|----------|----------------|
| a. | 2:11-13 | περιτομή | "circumcision" |
| b. | 2:16 | σάββατα | "sabbath" |

II. Elements found in pure Judaism though not exclusively:

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| a. | 2:8 | ἡ παράδοσις τῶν ἀνθρώπων | "the tradition of men" |
| b. | 2:16 (cf. 2:21) | | |
| | | βρώσις | "meat" |
| | | ἑορτή | "feast" |
| | | νεομηνία | "new moon" |

³J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (London: Macmillan & Co., 1904), p. 73.

⁴C. F. D. Moule, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. 30-31.

III. Exclusively, or at least predominantly Hellenic elements:

- | | | | |
|----|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| a. | 1:19 etc. | τὸ πλήρωμα | fulness, completeness |
| b. | 2:3 | γνῶσις | knowledge |
| c. | 2:8 | ἡ φιλοσοφία | philosophy |
| d. | 2:16 | πόσις | drink |
| e. | 2:23 | ἀφειδία σωματος | severity of the body |

IV. Not classifiable, per se.

- | | | | |
|----|---------|----------|---------------------|
| a. | 2:14 | δόγματα | ordinances, decrees |
| b. | 2:8, 20 | στοιχεῖα | elements |

In using the word "Jewish," Moule obviously used it in the sense of the "Normative Judaism" advocated by G. F. Moore, i.e., Pharisaic in character, which now is being rejected as normative. Many of the Hellenic features were absorbed into Judaism.

The items in Category II "meat," "feast" and "new moon" were found in the same verse as "sabbaths," the last three words being in the same phrase. Hort called it definitely a "Jewish phrase."⁵ Percy added the brilliant observation that one would not call pagan elements σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων, "a foreshadowing of things to come" (Colossians 2:17), in referring to "meat," "drink," "feast," "new moon" and "sabbaths."⁶ Moule included in the Hellenic category τὸ πλήρωμα, γνῶσις and ἡ φιλοσοφία, which should have, by his own admission, been

⁵H. F. A. Hort, Judaistic Christianity (London: Macmillan and Company, 1894), p. 117.

⁶Moule, op. cit., p. 32ff.

201
included in an unclassifiable section,⁷ because he said that (a), (b) and (c) were "far from certainly classifiable." He went on to say that (d) was not Jewish "for the Mosaic Law says little about clean and unclean drink..." and that (e) was "not a truly Jewish conception."⁸

Πόσις, "drink," was not considered Jewish, on the basis that the Mosaic Law said little about clean or unclean drink. Yet, Moule did admit in his footnote that Leviticus 11:34, 36 were cited by Lightfoot as evidence of Levitical Law on drink and purity, and he accepted the Jewish aspect if the reference was to abstinence.

Abstinence was certainly a significant factor in Israel and Judaism. "From the beginning of Jewish history to the end, the holy men desisted from wine....During the Second Commonwealth, the Water Drinkers formed a significant sect...."⁹ Finkelstein said many of the common people rejected wine drinking, whereas the patrician and rural teachers loved wine and respected its use.¹⁰

Yet, purity of drink was more than a matter of abstinence in Judaism. The Pharisees and Sadducees disputed about water

⁷I created category IV to cover elements that Moule mentioned unclassifiable per se.

⁸Moule, op. cit., p. 30, notes 3, 4, 5.

⁹Louis Finkelstein, The Pharisees (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1938), I, 109.

¹⁰Ibid.

purity; e.g., the water was contaminated or made pure by the source of supply and by whether the vessels were ritually clean or unclean.¹¹ A sect, probably the Essenes, was referred to in the Tosefta (third century A.D.) and whereas the Rabbis declared that the minute creatures generated in wine and vinegar were clean, this sect strained the bacteria out of the liquids. (Incidentally, this sect also pronounced a blessing on the sun.)¹² So the evidence certainly pointed to drink judgment within Judaism, although perhaps it was more applicable to the non-Pharisaic segment of the populace.

Αφειδία σωματος, "severity of the body", was labeled as "not a truly Jewish conception." Again, it must be remarked that Judaism was a "coat of many colors." The Qumran materials have reemphasized the notices of Josephus and Philo that there was within Judaism a strong tradition of asceticism.

Moule's classification is similar to the approach of many scholars. It is much too tentative and not really valid. The context and studies in Jewish background enable all these factors to be understood as Jewish.

The most controversial element in the "Colossian error" was that of the angel cult. A brilliant study had been made

¹¹Ibid., p. 637ff.

¹²Edwin Yamauchi, "Qumran and Colosse," Bibliotheca Sacra, 121 (April-June, 1964), p. 143, note 10.

of Colossians 2:18 in which the exegetical history of the text was presented and attention given to certain aspects of the Greek words which had not been investigated before.¹³ The verse was then translated: "Let no one disqualify you, being bent upon humility and the worship of angels - which he has seen upon entering - being puffed up by his mind of flesh."¹⁴

Some of the translation was different from the usual but the differences were merely semantic compromises between possible renderings and were not significant.

The words which bore investigation were:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| ταπεινοφροσύνη | humility |
| θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων | worship of the angels |
| ἃ ἑώρακεν ἐμβατεύων | [things] which he has seen [upon] entering into |

The first question was: What kind of humility was indicated? Francis said the context of Colossians 2:16-23 with references to food, drink, prohibition against tasting, and severity to the body all pointed to fasting.¹⁵ Comparison with *Hermas* presented the idea of fasting, but Tertullian provided an even broader term of reference. According to his usage, the translation might read "rigor of devotion: which

¹³Fred O. Francis, "Humility and Angelic Worship in Colossians 2:18" *Studia Theologica*, Vol. 16 (Fasc. 2, 1962), pp. 109-134.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 115.

encompassed fasting, abstinence, and stations."¹⁶ The Septuagint provided further basis for this usage. In addition, Hermas, Tertullian, and the Apocryphal literature supported the functional significance of rigorist humility as effectual for visions.¹⁷ The Apocryphal literature specified in many places that the purpose of asceticism was entry into heavenly places,¹⁸ and Philo also mentioned the conjunction of fasting and visionary transcendence.¹⁹ The practice continued in late Judaism according to Gershom Scholem.²⁰ Francis also pointed to visionary ascent in the Hermetic literature.²¹

There was scholarly support for the Francis exegesis that fasting in asceticism was meant when the term was used, especially in light of the phrase in verse 23 - "severity of the body."²² Zahn, Moffatt, Dibelius, Riesenfeld, Percy, Reicke, Lohmeyer, and Moule all followed this rendering, whereas the older exegetes usually emphasized the idea of false humility. Percy and Lohmeyer have also related the rigorism to the worship of angels.²³

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 117.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., p. 118.

²²Moule, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 104.

²³Francis, op. cit., p. 311.

The exegetical history of θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων, "worship of the angels," has been almost a universal translation of it as an objective genitive, i.e., the worship directed to the angels. However, apparently there have been those who have taken it to be a subjective genitive, the worship which the angels perform, viz.: Ephraem, Luther, Melancthon, Wolf, Dalmer, Hofmann, Zahn, Ewald.²⁴ As can be seen from the translation, Francis also translated as subjective genitive and not objective.

Francis rejected, therefore, the worship of angels as the object of the false teachers' piety and provided good exegetical grounds for doing so,²⁵ although he admitted that the problem cannot be solved by lexical methods. However, Radford observed, "the simplest explanation was probably the truest, viz., the practice of worshipping angels."²⁶ In the light of the continued emphasis upon angelolatry in Asia Minor, this interpretation seemed the best. Further, the studies in Jewish sources as we have already observed, have pointed to the worship of angels in Jewry.²⁷ Incidentally, another

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 126ff.

²⁶L. B. Radford; The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon (Westminster Commentaries, London: Methuen & Co., 1931), p. 246.

²⁷Against A. Lukyn-Williams, "The Cult of the Angels at Colosse" Journal of Theological Studies, X (April, 1909), p. 413-438.

argument was that "elements of the world" (2:8) could be associated with the angels of ascent.

Ἄ ἐδράκειν ἐμβατεύων has certainly caused translators headaches, so that Lightfoot and Hort have envisaged a corruption of the text. Dodd, however, said the verb was used as a technical expression of the mystery religions for entering upon a stage of initiation and could be rendered "entering the portals of vision."²⁸ There were other alternatives from the Old Testament. It could mean "to enter into possessions" (Joshua 19:49) or, in comparison with II Maccabee, it would mean "investigating."²⁹ Certainly there was difficulty in translating the text, but the general sense was more understandable.

The false teaching advocated discipline in preparation for visionary ascent. The angels were worshipped or invoked in order to obtain passage through the heavens. Whether worship of the angels, or merely the attempt to obtain salvation through visionary ascent was the motive,³⁰ it was apparent that this was a Jewish ascetic mysticism or gnosticism. Now certain other factors fall into place.

²⁸C. H. Dodd, "Colossians" The Abingdon Bible Commentary (Nashville: Abingdon, 1929), p. 1258; cf. F. F. Bruce's comments, ad loc. in E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 248ff.

²⁹Francis, op. cit., p. 119ff; Moule, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 108f.

³⁰Fred O. Francis, "Visionary Discipline and Scriptural Tradition" Lexington Theological Quarterly, 2 (July, 1967), pp. 71-81.

207

The thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers (1:16) were references to the world of spiritual beings and forces,³¹ to the supernatural potentates which were the subject of apocalyptic visions.³² Thus an insistence on Christ as having created these things and as being above them (1:15-20) pointed to a deficiency in the Christology of the errorists, a lack of recognition of Christ's preeminence over angelic forces.

Paul emphasized the believer's identification with Christ as if the Colossian errorists accepted the facts of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, but did not recognize the fact that the Christian has been made a conqueror also, by virtue of identity with Jesus Christ (2:10-13, 20, 3:1-3). Notice especially $\sigma\upsilon\nu$ used as a verbal prefix and an adjective pre-position.

Many commentators, noting the emphasis upon "every" in 1:28, "...admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ," have suggested that it represented a "deliberate rejoinder to some exclusive aspect of the false teachers' 'gospel.'"³³ The repetition three times of $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha \ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omega\nu$ emphasized the universality of the gospel and $\acute{\epsilon}\nu \ \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\sigma\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha$ seemed to show that

³¹Radford, op. cit., p. 169.

³²Moule, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and Philemon, p. 65.

³³Ibid., p. 85.

against a restriction of knowledge for certain people there was no limitation upon the content of teaching. "The character of the teaching is as free from restriction, as are the qualifications of the recipients."³⁴ So also the reference to Christ, "In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (2:3) and "all riches" (2:3), referred to the completeness of the gospel and that there was no wisdom or secret knowledge of God outside of Jesus Christ.³⁵ This note of possible exclusiveness in the message of the errorists points to a gnostic/mystic way of salvation.

There were certain significant terms which have not been discussed because of an uncertainty as to the possibilities of meaning, for example, πλήρωμα. Was it a technical term of gnostic thought signifying the supernatural beings in space between the world and God, or was its use merely of the fullness of divinity? Moule's word study appears to prove that the usage in Colossians was not the gnostic technical sense.³⁶ However, the contrast prior to the usage of πλήρωμα in 1:19 was between one mediator and many so the term implied that against the necessity of many mediators there was only the one in whom all the fullness of Divinity dwells.³⁷

³⁴J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon, p. 168.

³⁵Ibid., p. 171ff; and Moule, op. cit., p. 86.

³⁶Moule, Ibid., p. 164ff; cf. Lightfoot, Ibid., p. 255ff.

³⁷Lightfoot, Ibid., p. 260.

Another word which may be considered in a gnostic technical sense, γνῶσις, was also pre-gnostic in its use. "It was used as the right apprehension of revealed truth by the orthodox and heretics alike and secondarily of a participation in the nature of God...."³⁸ The term was not used in the ancient world as a label for the gnostic religion.³⁹ The Jewish idea of knowledge was more probably due to its Jewish background than immediate Hellenistic influence.⁴⁰

Similarly ἡ φιλοσοφία, although a Greek term, was used by Hellenistic Jews like Josephus and Philo to describe the sects and the thought of Judaism; the Rabbis would obviously use it in conversing with Greeks. Paul, therefore, merely used a term to describe a body of belief, and, in the context of Jewish terminology, it seemed right that this term, also δόγματα and ἡ παράδοσις τῶν ἀνθρώπων, should be considered as referring to Jewish elements.

A syncretistic Jewish Pre-gnosticism was generally accepted as the type of error combatted in Colossians (using Pre-Gnosticism in the sense now used in referring to the theosophical tendencies of the first century A.D.). Can the

³⁸Moule, op. cit., p. 161f.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰W. D. Davis, "Knowledge in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Matthew 11:25-30," Christian Origins and Judaism (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1962), pp. 119-144.

identification be applied more narrowly to show relationship with Jewish sectarianism? Comparative linguistic studies between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline epistles have shown that the closest parallels to the Scrolls were Colossians and Ephesians⁴¹ in "many elements of reminiscences, ideology, imagery, and language."⁴² So Brown suggested that "part of the explanation may be that the opponents in these Epistles seem to be Jewish sectarians...."⁴³ "The strong 'mystery' language of these Epistles and the moral admonitions which bear strong resemblances to Qumran paraenesis may represent the author's attempt to speak in a language that the opponents would understand."⁴⁴ Recourse was not needed to the mystery religions for the Pauline use of the word "mysterion", which could be traced to Semitic origins.⁴⁵ Lightfoot and Godet⁴⁶ were original champions of the idea that a Jewish sect similar to the Essenes was the background of the Colossian heresy.

⁴¹R. E. Brown, "Second Thoughts X: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament," The Expository Times, LXXVIII (Oct., 1966), p. 21.

⁴²W. F. Albright, "The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the Biblical Study," Near Eastern Archaeology, V (Spring-Summer, 1962), p. 10.

⁴³Brown, op. cit.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵W. F. Albright, "Retrospect and Prospect in New Testament Archaeology," The Teacher's Yoke: Studies in Memory of Henry Trantham, E.J. Vardaman, et.al., editors (Waco: Baylor, 1964), p.36

⁴⁶F. Godet, "The First Indications of Gnosticism in Asia Minor," Expositor, 3rd series, 4 (1886), pp. 161-184.

The parallels in practices were quite striking between Qumran and Colossae. The Covenanters were very interested in calendrical considerations, as were the errorists (2:16). The Essenes were stricter than the Pharisees in Sabbath observances and purity laws of food and drink.⁴⁷

The Essenes were ascetics, as were the errorists (2:18, 2:21). Francis made a strong case for translating 2:21 as "Do not have relations, do not taste, do not approach" instead of "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," deriving authority for this translation from the Septuagint and other New Testament passages ("Approach," Exodus 19:12; Hebrews 12:18ff; "Relations" Exodus 19:15; I Corinthians 7:1).⁴⁸ He related these injunctions to the ascetic discipline needed to make visionary ascent into the heavens.

The Qumran Covenanters were apocalyptists and ascetics and, although they did not proscribe marriage, they were inclined towards celibacy as useful for the contemplative life.⁴⁹

One important distinction was that there was no mention of illustrations in the Colossians, although in the passage wherein Paul condemned the error, right after the discussion of spiritual circumcision, he said, "Having been buried with him

⁴⁷E. Yamauchi, "Qumran and Colossae," p. 142.

⁴⁸Francis, "Visionary Discipline and Scriptural Tradition," p. 73.

⁴⁹Yamauchi, op. cit., p. 143; he sees no suggestion of celibacy in Colossians.

in baptism wherein ye were also raised with him...(2:12),²¹²
which could be a faint evidence of baptistic emphasis in the
heresy.

In studying attitudes, it would appear that legalism per
se was not the main problem but rather an adjunct to the
Colossian heresy.⁵⁰

The ascetic practices seemed to be related to preparation
for dreams and visions as in the case of Jewish apocalyptic
tradition. The Jewish Merkabah mystic (second century A.D.)
"must fast a number of days and lay his head between his knees
and whisper many hymns and songs, whose texts were known from
tradition. Then he perceived the interior and the chambers."⁵¹

"The mysticism of the Colossian heresy and the mysticism
of Qumram as reflected in the fragments from the Testament of
Levi found there both included visions of angels."⁵² So both
groups were in the tradition of Jewish apocalyptic.

Concerning concepts, knowledge was a pre-gnostic or
incipient gnostic idea in Qumram⁵³ and so it was also in
Colossians as we have already seen. The emphasis on angels

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (London:
Thames and Hudson, 1955), p. 49; cited by E. Yamauchi, Ibid.,
p. 144.

⁵²Yamauchi, "Qumran and Colossae," p. 144.

⁵³Ibid., p. 145.

213

provided another parallel.⁵⁴ In Soteriology the Colossian error appeared to have affinity with Gnostic rather than Qumran thought.⁵⁵ It was apparent that the Colossian errorists were Jewish apocalyptists, as were the Qumran Covenanters and, if the baptismal reference in 2:12 had background in the teachings of the errorists, then one could definitely say that this teaching fitted into the milieu of the Baptistic sectarian non-conformity which is now being recognized as part of the Jewish scene of that first Christian century.

The Colossian digression lay between Qumran and second century Gnosticism in that it appeared to be even more mystical in its concept of salvation, whereas the Qumran concept of grace was closer to Pauline doctrine.⁵⁶

Paul's fight was "not now against the Jew as such, but against the Jew become Gnostic...in other words; it is not against Christian Pharisaism but against Christian Essenism that he defends his position."⁵⁷

How does this teaching measure against the New Standard of Christ in the Primitive Church? Moule's synopsis on the passage, Colossians 2:4-3:4, pointed up the contrast between truth and error.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 147.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 151.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 150.

⁵⁷Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 97.

What I mean by saying that in Christ are included all possible stores of wisdom and insight amounts to this: nobody is to deceive you into thinking that something further is still needed, over and above incorporation in him. His death and resurrection were a decisive and final victory over all opposing forces; and if; when incorporated in him, you share that death and resurrection, you are not to submit to any arbitrary assertion that salvation is not complete without the addition of certain materialistic observances.⁵⁸

To this should be added that neither is a mystic way of salvation or worship of intermediaries necessary. Christ was the all sufficient one; nothing more could be added for salvation and nothing was greater than He. Simple faith in Him was the avenue to all truth, spiritual wisdom, and salvation.

Some exegetes found that the syncretistic nature of Judaism in Phrygia was sufficient background for such thought.⁵⁹ However, such a factor did not take into consideration the reduction of distinction between Diasporic and Palestinian Judaism which we have attempted to present. It also ignored the fact that Jewish Gnosticism puts in its appearance at Ephesus, which is not a Phrygian area, even though in the same valley system of the Meander-Lycus Rivers. Further, if the

⁵⁸Moule, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 97.

⁵⁹Goppelt, Jesus, Paul and Judaism, p. 185.

215

error in the Pastorals is considered Gnostic, then the Isle of Crete is certainly not to be considered under Phrygian influence. There were linguistic and religious differences between Phrygia and other parts of Asia Minor. The question is: "Was this Jewish Gnosticism found elsewhere in Asia Minor and did it continue for some time?"

II. THE PROBLEM IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

Date

The late dating of these epistles and the assumptions on which they were placed in the second century by older scholars (F. C. Bauer's "'proof' that the polemic of the pastorals was connected with the Gnosticism of the second century,"⁶⁰ and the belief that "the church organization...was thought to reflect a type of monarchical episcopate which could not have developed in the apostolic age"⁶¹ have been well nigh refuted by recent discoveries and scholarship.

The presence of a Gnosticising Judaism in the first century has been so accepted that "even Dibelius concedes that this argument [Equation of Pastorals with Second Century

⁶⁰W. G. Kummel, Introduction to the New Testament (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 261.

⁶¹E. Earle Ellis, "The Authorship of the Pastorals: A Resume and Assessment of Current Trends," The Evangelical Quarterly, XXXII (July-September, 1960), p. 153.

Gnosticism] can no longer be used to show the spuriousness of the letters."⁶²

The recognition by recent scholars of the diversity of ecclesiastic structure in the New Testament was such that the argument as to the stage of church organization has been weakened.⁶³ Further, the studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls have shown at an early date distinctions between elders and overseers corresponding to presbyteroi and episkopoi of the New Testament. Even before these studies, Jeremias had pointed out that the functions of the New Testament Bishop were similar to that of the mebaggerim of the Damascus Document.⁶⁴ "Therefore the assumption that the Pastorals are post-Pauline remains an assumption...."⁶⁵

⁶²Ibid., p. 156.

⁶³Ibid., p. 156f; and R. E. Brown, "Unity and Diversity in New Testament Ecclesiology," New Testament Essays (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 36-50.

⁶⁴W. F. Albright, "Retrospect and Prospect in New Testament Archaeology," The Teacher's Yoke: Studies in Memory of Henry Trantham, E. J. Vardaman and others, editors (Waco: Baylor, 1964), p. 38 (including reference to J. Jeremias, Kittel's Theological Word Book, II, p. 614ff); and cf. B. Reicke, "The Constitution of the Primitive Church in the Light of Jewish Documents," The Scrolls and the New Testament, K. Stendahl, editor (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 143-156, cited by Ellis, op. cit., p. 154.

⁶⁵R. E. Brown, op. cit., p. 38.

The assumed position of this study was Pauline authorship.⁶⁶ Certainly the evidence for authorship during the Apostolic Age was sufficiently strong that a date close to Pauline times could be posited.

The difficulty which scholars have experienced has been in placing the Pastorals within the context of Paul's life and travels. However, as Ellis pointed out, the Book of Acts is rather sketchy and "the a priori assumption that it can be used as a touchstone for Paul's life history falls considerably short of a 'first principle' for critical studies."⁶⁷ Paul spent five or six years in the Aegean area, allowing plenty of time for travel to Crete and Nicopolis and other travels also. E.g., Acts 19:10 spoke of the evangelization of the whole

⁶⁶In addition to Ellis, Brown and Albright, see D. Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), p. 198ff, for acceptance of Pauline authorship. The arguments against statistical analysis etc. were dealt with by Ellis and Guthrie. See also footnotes referring to other authorities, especially O. Cullman, "The Tradition," The Early Church (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1956), pp. 59-104. This study pointed to Paul's use of tradition. The argument against Pauline era authorship, resting on the use of "faith" as a body of doctrine in the pastorals found little support from such an exegetical study. There are difficulties in the arguments for Pauline authorship but just as many in those against it. So Brown said, "It should be remembered that there are first-rate scholars who still consider Paul as the author (in the broad biblical sense of "author" not necessarily in the current restricted sense of "writer"). And this is my own view," op. cit., p. 39; and see Kummel, op. cit., p. 261ff, for summary of opposite views.

⁶⁷Ellis, "The Authorship of the Pastorals," p. 154.

218
province of Asia.⁶⁸ The dating of the letters themselves was probably post-Acts.⁶⁹

There was tradition of Paul's release from Roman prison. By the end of the second century, it is found in the Muratorian Canon and the Acts of Peter III. I Clement, at the end of the first century, probably provides similar evidence.⁷⁰ However, the actual historical situation remains problematical and cannot be utilized in the arguments for or against Pauline authorship.⁷¹

Accepting a view of Pauline authorship, "in view of the uncertainty, the most that can be suggested is that I Timothy and Titus belong to a period not long before Paul's death and that II Timothy was written when the end was imminent."⁷²

The Heresy in the Pastorals

The various scriptures in which polemic against falsity was involved are as follows:

...Charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings....I Timothy 1:3b--2a.

But the end of the charge is love....From which things some having swerved have turned aside unto vain talking;

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 155.

⁶⁹Ibid., cf. Kummel, op. cit., p. 265.

⁷⁰Ellis, Ibid., and Kummel, Ibid.

⁷¹Ellis, Ibid.

⁷²Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p. 237.

desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm. I Timothy 1:5-7.

But the Spirit saith expressly, that in latter times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own consciences as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats....I Timothy 4:1-3.

...but refuse profane and old wives' fables.
I Timothy 4:7a.

If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain. I Timothy 6:3-5.

O Timothy, guard...turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called. I Timothy 6:20.

Of these things...charge them [Christians]... that they strive not about words, to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear. Give diligence ...handling aright the word of truth. But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. II Timothy 2:14-18.

But know this that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self... holding a form of godliness but having denied the power thereof....For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women...led away by divers lusts, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; and even as Jannes

and Jambres withstood Moses so do these also withstand the truth; men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. II Timothy 3:1-9. But evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. II Timothy 3:13.

For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ear from the truth and turn aside unto fables. II Timothy 4:3,4.

For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake....Reprove...that they may be sound...not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn away from the truthThey profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Titus 1:10-16.

...but shun foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. Titus 3:9.

The elements of heresy may be summarized under the headings:

I. Jewish Elements

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| I Timothy 1:7 | νομοδιδάσκαλοι | law teachers |
| 8 | νόμος | law |
| Titus 1:10 | περιτομῆς | circumcision |
| 1:14 | ἰουδαϊκός μύθος | Jewish myths (fables) |

II. Other elements which in the light of the above were probably Jewish:

II Timothy 3:8 - Jannes and Jambres. Reference to Jewish Haggadah

| | | |
|------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Titus 1:14 | ἐντολαῖς ἀνθρώπων | commandments of men |
| 3:9 | μάχας νομικὰς | legal fights |

III. Elements which may be Hellenistic Gnosticism or Speculative Jewish Gnosticism.

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| I Timothy 1:4 | μύθοις | myths or fables |
| I Timothy 1:4 | cf. Titus 3:9 | γενεαλογίαις |
| | απεράντοις | unending genealogies |
| I Timothy 4:7 | βωβήλους καὶ | profane and old womanish |
| | γραῶδεις μύθους | myths |
| I Timothy 6:20 | ἀντιθέσεις τῆς | opposing tenets of the |
| | ψευδωνύμου | falsely named knowledge |
| | γνώσεως | |

IV. Asceticism

I Timothy 4:3 - forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats.

V. Libertine Behavior

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| II Timothy 3:6 | Sexual immorality |
| I Timothy 6:3 | graft |
| I Timothy 1:4,6, 6:4, 20, | disputations: question- |
| II Timothy 2:14, 16 | ings, vain talking, doting |
| | about questions, disputes |
| | of words, railings, evil |
| | surmisings, wrangling, |
| | profane babblings foolish |
| | questionings. |

VI. Possibility of Magical Practices

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| II Timothy 3:8 | Jannes and Jambres |
| | According to the Jerusale- m Targum (Ex. 1:15, 7:11) and Damascus Document (5:17-19), these were the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses, and in the context, they were likened to the corrupt men of the last days. |
| II Timothy 3:18 | γόητες |
| | translated 'Imposters,' literally means magicians. Josephus (Antiquities 20: 5:1) described Theudas, |

the false messiah, by this word. This is the only appearance of the word in the New Testament.⁷³

cf. I Timothy 4:1 'Seducing spirits' and 'the doctrines of demons' connected with asceticism.

VII. Resurrection already past

This doctrine was taught by two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus.

II. Timothy 2:7,8.⁷⁴

VIII. There may have been intellectual pride and exclusiveness (II Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:16; I Timothy 2:4-6)

The context of the references to 'law teachers' (I Timothy 1:7) and those of the circumcision suggested that not all of those indicted were Jewish Christians.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the Jewish elements necessarily color the interpretation of the other elements. There does not seem to be any reason to regard "myths" and "genealogies" in any other than a Jewish light, nor interpret them in a Gnostic sense as Kummel does of "genealogies," identifying these as the "aeons" of Gnostic cosmology.⁷⁶ This Jewish element must have been of the

⁷³A. R. C. Leaney, The Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon (Torch Bible Commentaries, London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1960), ad. loc.

⁷⁴See the analysis in the commentaries by Spicq (Paris, 1947), p. LIIff; Leaney, op. cit., p. 25f; Barclay, p. 7 and Lock, p. xvii. See also the Introductions by Kummel p. 266f; Guthrie, p. 216f and McNeile, p. 190.

⁷⁵A. H. McNeile, An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 190.

⁷⁶Kummel, Introduction, p. 267.

speculative variety. This is established by the term "Jewish Myths."

Consideration of the above factors led Hort to declare that the reference to the "opposing tenets of the falsely named knowledge" (I Timothy 6:20) was merely a reference to Rabbinic opposition.⁷⁷ However, in the light of the combination of asceticism and libertinism, this view did not maintain itself.⁷⁸

The terminology seemed to relate to a body of belief known as "Gnosis," leading to the belief that an early form of gnosticism was being combatted, a view with which most of the commentators agreed.⁷⁹

The notice on asceticism and the accusations of libertinism could mean more than one type of heresy present, but it more likely was intended for one heresy, in that the reference to asceticism followed that referring to persons whose consciences were seared (I Timothy 4:2).

It would appear then, that the asceticism was related to mystical practices of the Jewish form. However, a progression towards gnosticism and away from mystical Judaism had to have taken place because Jewish mysticism emphasized continued purity of life in order to enter heaven, whereas the

⁷⁷Hort, Judaistic Christianity, p. 139ff.

⁷⁸McNeile, op. cit., p. 192.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 190ff; Kummel, op. cit., p. 267.

224

gnostic had only to fast, etc. in order to enter heaven. At other times licentiousness did not matter.

Too much should not be made of the reference to Alexander and Hymenaeus in that it is not specified where these two men were. Were they the church members of the place to which Paul wrote or from whence he penned his letter?

The error combatted was as much a matter of irrelevance as falsity, for example, note the following terms: empty words, wrangling, disputes. This may not be looked upon as a coherent and powerful heresy. It was much too vague for any real identity.⁸⁰ Lightfoot, in identifying the heretics with the Ophites, went too far.⁸¹

Two arguments which have been offered against finding incipient gnosticism in the Pastorals were that there was more than one heresy and that many passages refer to the future.⁸² Against the first objection it must be said that the various strands of thought were inextricably intertwined, asceticism with libertinism and Jewish with non-Jewish elements. The second problem vanishes when a careful reading of the text shows fluctuation between future and present (especially in tenses) and it is apparent that the tendencies rebuked were

⁸⁰Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, p. 217.

⁸¹J. B. Lightfoot, Biblical Essays (London, Macmillan and Co., 1893), p. 416f.

⁸²Hort, op. cit., p. 132.

already present. This was an author conscious of being in the end times, living, even though towards the end of his life, in the hope of His coming⁸³ (I Timothy 6:14; II Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:13).

The addressees, Timothy and Titus, were noted as being in Ephesus (I Timothy 1:3; II Timothy 1:15) and Crete (Titus 1:5) respectively. Eusebius said that Timothy was the first bishop of Ephesus and that Titus was the first bishop of Crete (Eusebus 3:4). So Paul was writing to these younger men, giving counsel regarding church affairs. He may have been referring to a generally prevailing state of affairs, but more probably to the situation that Timothy and Titus faced.

It would appear, then, that at Ephesus and Crete there was a Jewish speculative heresy which was not fully identifiable but probably related by virtue of ascetic practices and magic to Jewish non-conforming sects. (Perhaps the admonition to Timothy to "be no longer a water drinker," I Timothy 5:23, may have been a reference to sectarian practice.) The church in Asia continued to have problems with this syncretistic form of religion.

Timothy and Titus were referred to the body of doctrine, the tradition, as the weapon against the heresy. Paul referred to the whole body of doctrine in terms of "the faith" (I Timothy

⁸³O. Cullman, "The Return of Christ," The Early Church, p. 141-162.

1:19); "the truth" (I Timothy 3:15); "knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4); "the teaching" (I Timothy 4:13); "the commandment" (I Timothy 6:14); "the charge" (I Timothy 1:5); the "deposit" (I Timothy 6:20); the "healthy teaching" or "words" (I Timothy 1:10).⁸⁴ It should be asserted against the form critics that this tradition (paradosis) went back through the Apostolic Church to the Lord Himself.⁸⁵ The tradition was distinguished from the teaching of the heretics in that it was "sound," it came from "the Lord Jesus Christ," and it was according to godliness, i.e., trustworthy, authoritative, and productive of ethical living (I Timothy 6:3ff).

That these false teachers were peripatetics may be a strong possibility. The world of that time was used to the sight of traveling philosophers and prophets who would make speeches on any subject, hold debates, dispute, and wrangle among themselves. They speculated upon the most meager topics.⁸⁶ The tone of the epistles does appear to suggest that the false teachers were a group from without; however, Paul intimated that a "cooling" church takes an interest in such teachings which enable religion without separation (II Timothy 4:3).

⁸⁴McNeile, op. cit., p. 193. See further references.

⁸⁵Leaney, op. cit., p. 28.

⁸⁶W. Barclay, The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 142ff.

There was a tendency afoot to turn away from simplicity unto a more sophisticated doctrine, from a simple belief in the efficacy of Jesus Christ's death for salvation unto complicated thought, mythology, and mystical approaches to enter Heaven.

III. THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES AND FALSE TEACHING

In the discussion of these epistles, authorship and date did not need as much attention as the pastoral epistles. "The verdict of tradition...is equally clear and unanimous that the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle are both the legacy of the Apostle John, in his old age, to the church."⁸⁷

Polemic was not the main element in John's writing but it was an important one. What was the heresy that led him to make such strong affirmations?

The specific verses where heretical thoughts were mentioned have been collected:

If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we lie...

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves...

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar...
I John 1:6-10.

Little Children, it is the last hour and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even so now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour.

⁸⁷R. Law, The Tests of Life (Edinburgh: H.T. Clar, 1909), p. 40.

They went out from us, but they were not of us...

I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father ...2:18-23.

Everyone that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness...3:4.

Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him...3:6.

...let no man lead you astray; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that doeth sin is of the devil. 3:7,8.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already...he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 4:1-6.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 4:8.

For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.
II. John 7.

If anyone cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not...II John 10.

Analysis of these thoughts present the following:

I. Antinomianism

- a. Ethics considered inconsequential. I John 1:6, 8, 10.
- b. Sin not considered as breaking of the Law. I John 3:4.
- c. Fellowship with God not related to sin. I John 1:6, 3:6-8

II. False Christology

- a. Denial that Jesus was the Messiah. I John 2:22.
- b. Denial of the Incarnation. I John 4:2,3; II John 7.

III. Claims of False Teachers

- a. Claimed fellowship with God. I John 1:6.
- b. Claimed to have seen Him. I John 3:6.
- c. Claimed to have the Father apart from the Son.
I John 2:23.
- d. Claimed to know God. I John 3:6.

In the face of the above factors, others became apparent and the apostle made some tremendous affirmations which further illuminate the situation to which he spoke.

John affirmed the Incarnation (1:2, 3; 4:2, 3, 5:20). He claimed to have been an eyewitness of it (1:1-4), which could be the refutation of an opposition which denied it.

John's statement that Jesus Christ came by water and blood (I John 5:6) could be an assertion that the Messiah was crucified in the face of a denial, especially as it seemed that the Messiah's baptism was accepted but not his death.

"....This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood."

He insisted that genuine Christians were the true "knowing ones:"⁸⁸

"In the Johannine system 'knowledge' is never a purely intellectual process. It is acquired by

⁸⁸A. Ross, The Epistle of James and John (The New International Commentary, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), p. 116.

the exercise of all the faculties of intellect heart, and will. Fellowship and acquaintance are its cognate ideas. It is developed in the growing experience of intercourse."⁸⁹

"Know" and "knoweth" occur 38 times in the Johannine epistles (translations of the two Greek words οἶδα and γινώσκω). John said that the addressees of the Epistle already know the truth (2:21). He wished them to know that they had eternal life because they had the Son (5:12, 13). It was the result of an unction from the Holy One (2:20, 3:24, 4:13). Pragmatic tests of the fact of knowing God were holiness of life and conduct (2:3, 5, 29; 5:2, 18) and love for God and the brethren (3:14; 4:7, 8; 5:2). The true knowledge of God was shown through love for brethren (3:16), by awareness of God's love (4:7), by an uncondemned heart (3:19), by His Spirit (4:13) and was made understandable because He revealed His love in Jesus Christ's death (3:16).

"The knowledge of which John speaks is not an awareness due to study and reflexion (sic.); it is no speculation; neither is it mystical vision, with liberation from the bonds of history and of this world's business: these, on the contrary, are the field in which it finds fulfilment."⁹⁰

⁸⁹A. E. Brooke, The Johannine Epistles (The International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), p. 29.

⁹⁰R. Bultmann, Gnosis (Vol. V of Kittel Bible Key Words, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1952), p. 66.

This tremendous emphasis on true knowledge should be seen against the backdrop of Gnostics who claimed a superior knowledge of God. The false teaching as delineated was examined for elements of Judaism, Docetism, Gnosticism and Cerinthianism. That the false teachers did not accept the fact that Jesus was the Messiah seemed to point more probably to a Jewish element than Greek.⁹¹

Docetism, which may be translated as "seemism,"⁹² was interpreted in two forms. The narrow definition meant that the Lord had only a phantasmal body; the wider definition was used in the sense of a denial of the Lord's Incarnation. Polycarp mentioned Docetism as the error being fought in the Epistles of John, but it was probably the wider definition, the denial of the Lord's incarnation, that was used.⁹³

That there were Gnostic elements in the teaching was obvious; Docetism and Cerinthianism actually fall within this

⁹¹Bultmann, Ibid., p. Xli; cf. N. Alexander, The Epistles of John (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 32f "to Jews...it meant: 'Jesus was not Israel's promised Messiah,' To first century Hellenistic Christian heretics the same expression meant: 'The man Jesus was not inseparably, essentially, united to the Divine Christ.'" (One wonders however if modern twentieth century thinking was not being read into the first century in the above statement. Both Brooke and Alexander arrived at Cerinthianism as the best explanation of the heresy. In the light of the historical evidence Alexander defeats himself.)

⁹²W. Barclay, The Letters of John and Jude (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 8.

⁹³Brooke, op. cit., p. Xliv.

category. This was not the full-blown heresy of the second century, however. There was an emphasis on special knowledge; a denial of the unity of divine and human qualities in Jesus Christ, and libertine living - yet with a lack of comprehension as to the equation of sin with breaking of the law.

Most scholars see the heresy opposed as Cerinthianism, a peculiar brand of Docetism.⁹⁴ This heresy has already been delineated in this study, but it is important to re-emphasize that Cerinthus believed that the divine Christ descended upon the human Jesus at his baptism but left him before his crucifixion. John, on the other hand, insisted that Jesus was the Christ not only by virtue of His baptism (water) but also in His atoning death (blood). Jesus is fully the Christ, in the deepest sense of His being the pre-existent Son of God (which again Cerinthus explicitly denied), and He is completely man at every point (I John 1:1-4).

Cerinthus emphasized circumcision, stressed food laws, regarded creation by intermediaries, and anticipated a sensual, materialistic, millennial eschatology.⁹⁵ In light of the fact that Irenaeus located him with John in Asia Minor⁹⁶ and that

⁹⁴Brooke, Alexander, Ross, Barclay, Guthrie, Law, Westcott, Stott; see Kummel p. 310 for continental scholars; opposed-Schneckenburg, Windrich. (See Kummel p. 310, Guthrie, p. 19).

⁹⁵J. A. T. Robinson, Twelve New Testament Studies (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1962), p. 134ff.

⁹⁶Ibid.

early Docetism probably had a Jewish origin,⁹⁷ it is apparent that once again a Jewish Gnosticism was the problem. "All these emphases, so characteristic of the Epistles, can best, I believe, be understood if they are seen as necessary correctives to deductions drawn from the teaching of the fourth Gospel by a gnosticising movement within Greek-speaking Diaspora Judaism."⁹⁸ Further, the close identification of Cerinthus and Ebionites by Irenaeus suggests that Cerinthus was not unique but represented a movement and that this is another example of the church inheriting the Jewish problems.

IV. SUMMARY

If the evidence of this chapter is acceptable in the light of the material preliminary to it, then the case has been established that there was a Jewish speculative "gnosis" which caused the church its first problems after the Judaizing conflict.

⁹⁷J. G. Davies, "The Origins of Docetism," Studia Patristica, VI (1962), p. 18f. Note especially the recognition that the Ignatian epistles oppose a Jewish Docetism and the arguments presented in favor of the concept, p. 15ff.

⁹⁸Robinson, op. cit., p. 138; and cf. J. C. O'Neill, The Puzzle of 1st John. A New Examination of Origins (London: S.P.C.K., 1966), 67pp. "The solution proposed is that the author of 1st John belonged to a Jewish sectarian movement. Opponents were members of the Jewish sect who had refused to follow their brethren into the Christian movement." [New Testament Abstracts, XI (2, 1967), p. 278].

Absolute identification of the heresies opposed was not found possible. Identification in the Johannine epistles was only made possible by the more precise historical background. The epistles themselves do not present a straight line development from Colossians to Pastorals to Johannine Epistles as Lightfoot has advocated. Rather the Pastorals presented an indistinct picture - Jewish "Gnosis," rather Jewish-Christian "gnosis," yes; but doctrinal identifications were very indistinct. Forced exegesis might present a more attractive case but would fail to convince.

There did seem a definite progression from the Colossian Heresy to Cerinthus. There was more progression away from Judaism and Christianity in Christological error and certain antinomian aspects. Cerinthus himself was a bridge between Jewish Ebionism and Gnosticism, between Christianity and Second Century Gnosticism.

CHAPTER XI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

I. SUMMARY

The course of research began in the Old Testament with the religion of ancient Israel. It was noted that a God-revealed standard was established, and that Israel's constant propensity was to stray away from the truth. Aided by false leaders, prophets, and priests the common Israelite was constantly provided with the opportunity to demean the worship of Yahweh.

The tendency continued in Ancient Judaism even after the so-called catharsis of the Babylonian Exile.

There was a continuation of syncretistic leaning during the Graeco-Roman period even during the days when the Rabbis had supposedly gained control of Judaism. The milieu out of which many-sided facets of Judaism came enabled one to understand the Patristic claims that Gnosticism arose out of Judaism. The particular types of Jewish thought, which provided the elements to be metamorphosed by the second century gnostics into different systems were surveyed. It was necessary, then, to emphasize the connection between Palestine and the Diaspora, in order to show that the early appearance of an incipient gnosticism in the church arose out of Judaism and that it appeared in Asia Minor.

The antecedent factors in the New Testament were studied prior to the investigation of gnosticism in selected epistles of the New Testament, the most important being the recognition of the New Standard in the person of Jesus Christ.

The final study on Jewish incipient gnosticism in the New Testament had the effect of establishing its presence in an inductive manner, providing the final link in the chain of proof concerning Jewish (and Jewish Christian) Gnosticism as an entity, and objectifying the study as a whole.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The historical studies provided the necessary overall context for the study of false teaching in the Apostolic church and the Epistles in particular. They provided evidence for the historical probability of the Hellenization of Palestine¹ and that in the face of "the closest approach to a rational unified culture that the world has yet seen"² i.e., the Graeco-Roman civilization, Judaism received Hellenistic factors in varying degrees. The New Testament ethos of Aramaic and Hellenistic features are, thus, easily explained by these remarks.

¹W. D. Davies, "Paul and Judaism," The Bible in Modern Scholarship, J. Philip Hyatt (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 179.

²W.F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity (New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1957), p. 121.

Similarly, it can be understood why the Apostolic church faced a syncretistic problem in the first generation; it was because it had fallen heir to a varied Jewish heritage. Continuity between the Old and New Covenants led to the reception of extrabiblical tradition and literature.

Acceptance of the presence of gnosticism in the Apostolic period provides insight as to the church's answer to such thought. Many modern scholars are inclined to see the Gnostic as having a better answer to the problem of men than Orthodox Christianity and so Christianize these thinkers. Such was not the opinion of the early church, beginning with Paul.

III. IMPLICATIONS

The picture of Judaism that has unfolded in this study was surprisingly like the variegated picture of the modern day movement. The Jew has a remarkable quality of being able to assimilate various factors of culture and yet retain identity. In modern social contact, one is made aware that there are even those who are atheistic Jews, yet they are proud of the fact that they are Jews. There is a surprising quality of self-awareness and a manifest clannishness among the Jews. Perhaps the explanation is that they are the Chosen People, who in spite of disobedience are yet to figure in God's apocalyptic plans. The Church, The New Commonwealth of Israel, cannot retain its identity vis-a-vis the world as easily as the Jew, because its membership is not based on pedigree. Assimilation

of the world may lead to dilution and disintegration.

Syncretism

The people under Covenant constantly faced the problem of retaining the purity of truth. First it was monotheism, then it became the truth of Jesus Christ which was in danger.

How much cultural and religious material can be assimilated without being engulfed in the culture or religion with which identity is being sought? The Scriptures answer "no compromise upon essentials!" and even go further by asserting that the antithetical factors must be enunciated in encountering culture and creed. This is not to say that bridges must not be established by understanding the culture, so that the difficulty, which a God-seeker may have, may be removed by understanding his problem. Rather, it is to say that there must be no dilution, no compromise in order to have a follower, not to say disciple.

Paul, in speaking to the Athenians, quoted from Greek philosophers and poets and yet dared to speak of the resurrection, a concept directly contrary to Greek thought.

In writing to the Colossians, Paul used a mystical language and technical terms apropos to the problem in hand; yet the Theology, the Christology and Soteriology expressed are among the highest in content in the New Testament. Again, in the Pastorals, there was no expression of consideration of

Dialogue with the disturbers, but a tremendous emphasis on tradition, on sound doctrine, and on reproving, rebuking and exhorting the truth. There was a recognition that false doctrine leads to ungodliness. Ethics is dependent upon credo. Nothing is more evident in the present day of anarchy.

What is to be our standard for today - Dialogue or Attack? Harold Lindsell has attempted to correlate the two in demanding "Attack Syncretism with Dialogue."³ He noted that the "Wheaton Declaration" opposed syncretism, advocated the uniqueness and finality of Jesus Christ, yet sought for greater effectiveness in communicating the gospel whilst avoiding unbiblical cultural accretions.⁴

"If theological syncretism prevails," he says, "it will do so because evangelicals have abdicated their responsibilities....Need we be reminded that no one can preach the gospel if he is isolated from the religious ideas and systems of those he is trying to reach? And we should not be naive enough to suppose that this means Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims, but not existentialists, secularists, and anti-Christian scientists, and agnostics."⁵

He goes on to point out that the evangelical must project himself into "involvement with people who hold all the options that challenge Christianity."⁶ He must be willing to listen

³H. Lindsell, "Attack Syncretism With Dialogue," Evangelical Missions Quarterly, III (Summer, 1967), pp. 203-208.

⁴Ibid., p. 203.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 204.

to really hear what the other is saying so that we do not knock down straw men and so offend the one misunderstood.⁷

Dialogue did not mean compromise or concessions. Rather, commitment to Christianity must be passionate. "It always includes a proper dogmatism, that the exponent of Christian faith possesses final truth, not of his own devising, but revealed by God in Scripture."⁸ If, having presented his case and urged a positive response, there is no response, the Christian may, sorrowfully, have to break off the Dialogue.⁹ Lindsell's plea is to meet people where they are, where they are living, thinking and dying.¹⁰

This use of the term Dialogue is fine if the sense is that in no way is the other person - Hindu, Existentialist, or whatever - left with the belief that he has an option between two ways to the same destiny. This was the reason why the "No Other Gospel" movement in Germany boycotted the Kirchentag this past year. They felt that by being there they would tacitly admit that Bultmann, Kasemann, and Bornkamm represented legitimate options in German church life. There must be the "either/or" proposition. At what point in the current theological scene does dialogue end when the other party or parties refuse to "see" the truth? Isn't there a point when

⁷Ibid., p. 205f.

⁸Ibid., p. 206.

⁹Ibid., p. 207.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 208.

the evangelical must say "Heresy!" and endeavor to see that the offender loses his influential place in the church?

It appears that one (who most probably was a former pupil of Lindsell) disagreed with Lindsell on the matter of syncretism as an approach to missions. Corwin, in pointing out "Why Syncretism Won't Work,"¹¹ said that syncretism showed that a religion was weakening.¹²

Accepting a syncretistic viewpoint, i.e., that "all roads lead to the summit, so why make which road a major issue?"¹³ is a way to extinction. "Trying to make Christianity compatible with non-Christian religions and cultures only paves the way for its extinction."¹⁴

Corwin goes so far as to point out that even trying to get a common ground in religious language, concept, and cult will fail. He cites examples in China, Japan and Southeast Asia to show that it will not work. In Japan, the Jesuits, using this method and seeing numbers of the early converts renounce the faith, questioned the approach. They changed and, for example, the Catechism writers used Japanized Portuguese words to explain Biblical concepts. God became Deusu; the Cross, curuzusu; faith, fidesu. Compromise with Buddhist or Shinto

¹¹C. Corwin, "Why Syncretism Won't Work," Evangelical Missions Quarterly IV (Fall, 1967), pp. 41-47.

¹²Ibid., p. 41.

¹³Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 47.

practices was made a mortal sin. The result was the report that those who went through the catechism seldom returned to idols, and the death of martyrs was recorded.¹⁵

Animistic and monistic religions have no problem with syncretism. For one, all is divine; for the other, all is an expression of the ultimate. However, Judaism and Christianity are exclusive religions. "Historic Judaism and Christianity logically reject religious syncretism" and for this reason antagonism is set up, because these other forms "cannot embrace a system that rejects syncretism."¹⁶ This was one reason for Rome's persecution of Christians. So even the Bible translator must be careful not to choose words with animistic or monistic connotations.¹⁷ There are hard sayings; there is a separation; there is an offense of the gospel.

Corwin's study does not negate Lindsell's; it merely presents the dangers. He himself, as a missionary to Japan, is obviously informed as to Japanese culture and religion and so is aware of the areas in which he can identify. Lindsell's plea is to listen to what people are really saying and sympathize with them. Certainly the Apostle Paul used terms which gnostics used later and probably contemporaneously with him. The Pleroma was used to describe the fullness of Christ

¹⁵Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 47.

and the fact that all other powers were subjected to Him.

There was an acceptance of the conceptual world, and yet the superiority of Christ was displayed. However, the syncretistic problem with which the church had to deal was very subtle.

Gnosticism

Proving the existence of Jewish Gnosticism provides the link between the Apostolic Church and the Second Century Gnostic movement. It explains to a certain extent the phenomena of such a widespread movement, with such an elaborate cosmology, dualism, etc., hardly a hundred years after the death of Jesus. It needed only the appearance of Jesus Christ to inject into the thinking the idea of a Redeemer which, linked with the mystic Adam figure, produced the gnostic Redeemer. The puzzlement as to the seeming contradiction between the terms Judaism and Gnosticism had prevented an earlier widespread acceptance. The new discoveries have provided the key to much of the puzzles.

Gnosticism provides the key to the essential understanding of syncretism, viz., the reinterpretation of terms and truths, so that a new content is poured into the container. This is the real danger which Corwin did not postulate, not that the Christian would take other terms and thoughts and utilize them to convey the truth, but that he would take the truth and reinterpret it so that it is no longer the truth. Bultmann, in applying Existential theology to the New Testament

in his "demythologizing" process, actually dehistoricizes it. Cullman, in his recent book Salvation in History, has argued for the similarity of Rudolf Bultmann's theology and the "gnosis" of the second century. He then asks the question that if the early church's struggle with gnosticism was really a matter of life and death, is there not, in the present theological debate, something similar at stake?¹⁸ Evangelicals would answer in the affirmative.

The Words of the Bible are no longer allowed to have their own meaning, but are first emptied of their original meaning and then refilled with the philosophical pre-suppositions of man....

As far as we can see this is nothing other than a modern version of gnosticism. Gnosticism was the philosophical deformation and reinterpretation of the Christian gospel in the first centuries of the Christian era.¹⁹

Those theologians who would reinterpret the gospel to fit modern culture in the same manner as Bultmann would have received the anathema of the Apostolic church.

Interestingly enough, three of the foremost students of Gnosticism are R. Bultmann, Hans Jonas, and Carl Jung. Jonas'

¹⁸W. Rordorf, "The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann and Second Century Gnosis," New Testament Studies, XIII (July, 1967), p. 351. citing O. Cullman, Salvation in History, (London: S.C.M., 1967).

¹⁹K. Runia, I Believe in God (London: The Tyndale Press, 1963), p. 60; and G. L. Borchert, "Is Bultmann's Theology a New Gnosticism?" Evangelical Quarterly, XXXVI (1964), pp. 222-228.

studies vividly portray Gnosticism as the precursor of modern nihilistic Existentialism.²⁰ So it is not surprising "that Rudolf Bultmann should find gnosticism an attractive instrument for recovering dimension in the New Testament - for awakening modern man from his slumber and confronting him with the full horror of his alienation."²¹ It represented a victory of Nominalism over Realism.²² Jung, on the other hand, as a psychiatrist, seeing a similarity between this age and that of Graeco-Roman man, accounted for the rise of "gnosis" as a "result of the final breakdown of classical culture."²³ He interpreted all the gnostic symbols as projections of the inner self, a "mystical naturalism devoid of the radical transcendence that existentialist interpretations find in it."²⁴

Whichever interpretation is right (and, to the Evangelical, the psychic depths of Jung do not seem very different from the "radical transcendence" of existentialism], it is apparent that the Gospel's confrontation with Gnosticism in the New Testament and in the Apostolic and Early Catholic Church ought to provide insights for confronting modern culture. The Existential

²⁰W. R. Schoedel, "The Rediscovery of Gnosis," Interpretation XVI (October, 1962), p. 389.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 390.

²⁴Ibid., p. 391.

theologian puts himself in the place of the gnostic. What, therefore, should be the posture of the Defender of the Faith? Whatever happens, one must not turn to a theology of concepts empty of the realities of faith.²⁵ There must be a determination to hold to the "tradition," as in Pastorals; along with a high Christology, as in Colossians, and the strong emphasis on assurance and love, as in John.

Further Possible New Testament Studies

The gnostic opposition has been traced in other New Testament books. If the two Corinthian epistles are taken as an entity, then the opposition would appear to be a Jewish Gnosticism. However, the historical background is not as favorable as those studied. Clement of Rome and Hegessipus stated that the church in Corinth held to the truth.

Some have found traces of gnostic opposition in the Thessalonian epistles, which to the present writer seemed somewhat doubtful. On the other hand, the short references in Romans 16:17-20, Philipians 3:17-19, and Ephesians 5:6, 11 probably refer to some form of gnostic heresy but are too short for absolute identification.

Jude and Second Peter were written against Antinomian Gnosticism, and in light of the material used, were also

²⁵O. Piper, "Change of Perspective," Interpretation, XVI (October, 1962), p. 417.

directed against those who were influenced by Jewish esoteric doctrine.

The Gospels might be examined for sitz im Leben regarding combatting false teaching, e.g., the Gospel of John was supposedly written against Cerinthus.

All these areas bear investigation in light of the present study.

IV. EPILOGUE

Paul said that "there must be factions in the church that the ones who are approved may be made manifest in the church" (I Cor. 11:19).

The presence of error makes the truth shine forth and it causes those who hold the truth to be diligent in the proclamation and defence of the truth. To a large extent the opposition that Paul and the other apostles received produced the occasion for the Holy Spirit to inspire them to write the greatest theological expositions of doctrinal and practical worth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

- Albright, W. F. Archaeology and the Religion of Israel.
Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1942. 238 pp.
- _____. Archaeology of Palestine. Baltimore: Penguin
Books, 1961. 271 pp.
- _____. The Biblical Period From Abraham to Ezra. New
York: Harper and Row, 1963. 114 pp.
- _____. From the Stone Age to Christianity. New York:
Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1957. 432 pp.
- _____. "Retrospect and Prospect in New Testament
Archeology," The Teacher's Yoke: Studies in Memory of
Henry Trantham. E. J. Vardaman, et. al., editors. Waco:
Baylor, 1964. pp. 27-41.
- Alexander, N. The Epistles of John. New York: The Macmillan
Company, 1962. 173 pp.
- Anderson, Bernard W. (ed.). "The New Covenant and the Old,"
The Old Testament and Christian Faith. New York:
Harper & Row, 1963. pp. 225-242.
- Baeck, Leo. "The Origin of Jewish Mysticism," The Pharisees
and Other Essays. New York: Schocken Books, 1947.
pp. 93-108.
- Barclay, W. The Letters of John and Jude. Philadelphia:
Westminster Press, 1960. 245 pp.
- _____. The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960. 324 pp.
- Barnard, L. W. Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and Their
Background. New York: Schocken Books, 1966. 177 pp.
- Beasley-Murray, S. P. Baptism in the New Testament. London:
Macmillan, 1962. 424 pp.
- Bickerman, Elias. From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees.
New York: Schocken Books, 1962. 186 pp.
- Black, Matthew, The Scrolls and Christian Origins. New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961. 206 pp.
- Bloch, Joshua, On the Apocalyptic in Judaism. Philadelphia:
Dropsie College, 1952. 154 pp.

- Braun, F. M. "Le Mandéisme et la Secte Essénienne de Qumrân," L'Ancien Testament et l'orient. Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1957. pp. 193-230.
- Bright, J. A History of Israel. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959. 500 pp.
- Brooke, A.E. The Johannine Epistles. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912. 242 pp.
- Brown, Raymond E. "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles," The Scrolls and the New Testament, K. Stendahl (ed.). New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957. pp. 183-207.
- _____. "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament Ecclesiology," New Testament Essays. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1965. pp. 36-50.
- Bruce, F. F. Commentary on the Book of Acts. New International Commentary. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954. 555 pp.
- _____. The Defence of the Gospel in the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959. 105 pp.
- Bultman, R. Gnosis. Vol. V of Kittel Bible Key Words. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1952. 67 pp.
- Cadbury, Henry J. "Over conversion in Paul's Churches," The Joy of Study. S. E. Johnson (ed.) New York: Macmillan Company, 1951. pp. 43-50.
- Carrington, P. The Early Christian Church. 2 Vols. Cambridge: University Press, 1957.
- Carter, C. and R. Earle, The Acts of The Apostles. The Evangelical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959. 435 pp.
- Casey, Robert P. "Simon Magus," The Beginning of Christianity, F.J.F. Jackson, and K. Lake (eds.). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966. V, 151-163.
- Charles, R. H. The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English. 2 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913. 684 pp.

- _____. The Book of Enoch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912. 331 pp.
- Cohen, M. "The First Christian Century as Jewish History," The Bible in Modern Scholarship. J. P. Hyatt, (ed.). Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965. pp. 227-251.
- Cross, F. L. (ed.). "Clementine Literature," The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. London: Oxford University Press, 1957. 301 pp.
- Cullman, O. The Christology of the New Testament. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959. 342 pp.
- _____. Christ and Time. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950. 253 pp.
- _____. Le Probleme littéraire et historique du roman pseudo-Clémentin. Paris: F. Alcan, 1930. 271 pp.
- _____. "The Return of Christ," The Early Church. London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1956. pp. 141-164.
- _____. "The Tradition," The Early Church. London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1956. pp. 43-50.
- _____. Salvation in History. London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1967. 352 pp.
- Daniélou, J. The Theology of Jewish Christianity. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964. 446 pp.
- Daube, D. The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism. London: Athlone Press, 1956. 460 pp.
- Davies, W. D. Christian Origins and Judaism. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962. 259 pp.
- _____. "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls," The Scrolls and the New Testament. K. Stendall (ed.). New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957. pp. 157-182.
- _____. Paul and Rabbinic Judaism. London: S.P.C.K., 1962. 392 pp.
- _____. "Paul and Judaism," The Bible in Modern Scholarship, J. Philip Hyatt, (ed.). Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965. pp. 178-186.

- Delorme, J. "The Practice of Baptism in Judaism at the Beginning of the Christian Era," Baptism in the New Testament. A. George, et. al., (eds.). Baltimore: Hebcon, 1964. pp. 25-62.
- Dodd, C. H. The Bible and the Greeks. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935. 264 pp.
- _____. "Colossians," The Abingdon Bible Commentary. Nashville: Abingdon, 1929. pp. 1250-1262.
- Doresse, Jean. The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics. New York: Viking Press, 1960. 445 pp.
- Driver, J. R. The Judean Scrolls. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965. 624 pp.
- Drower, E. S. Haran Gawaiti and Masbuta d-Hibil-Zuva. Rome: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1953. 96 pp.
- _____. The Secret Adam. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960. 123 pp.
- Elliott-Binns, Leonard E. Galilean Christianity. Chicago: A.R. Allenson, Inc., 1956. 80 pp.
- Farmer, W. R. Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus. New York: Columbia University Press, 1956. 239 pp.
- Finkel, Asher. The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth. London: E. J. Brill, 1964. 184 pp.
- Finkelstein, L. The Pharisees, 2 Vols. Philadelphia: Jewish Publishing Society of America, 1940.
- Fitzmeyer, J. "The Qumran Scrolls, the Ebionites and their Literature," The Scrolls and the New Testament, K. Stendahl, (ed.). New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957. pp. 208-231.
- Förster, W. From the Exile to Christ. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964. 247 pp.
- Fox, George A. "Sibylline Books," Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, IX. New York: The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Inc., 1943. p. 525.

- Gasque, W. Ward. Sir William M. Ramsay: Archæologist and Scholar. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966. 95 pp.
- Gaster, Theodor H. The Dead Sea Scriptures. New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1964. 420 pp.
- _____. "Samaritans," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, IV. New York: Abingdon, 1962. p. 993.
- Ginsberg, H. L. "The Dead Sea Manuscript finds. New Light on Eretz Yisrael in the Graeco-Roman Period," Israel: Its Role in Civilization. Moshe Davis, (ed.). New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1956. pp. 39-57.
- Goodenough, Erwin R. Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period, 12 Vols. New York: Pantheon, 1953-1965.
- _____. By Light, Light. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935. 436 pp.
- Goppelt, L. Jesus, Paul and Judaism. New York: T. Nelson & Sons, 1964. 192 pp.
- Gordon, Cyrus H. The World of the Old Testament. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958. 312 pp.
- Grant, R. M. Gnosticism and Early Christianity. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960. 241 pp.
- _____. Ignatius of Antioch. Vol. IV of the Apostolic Fathers. Camden: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1966. 142 pp.
- _____. "Clementine Literature," Encyclopaedia Britannica, V. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1965. 900-901.
- _____. A Historical Introduction to the New Testament. New York: Harper & Row, 1963. 447 pp.
- Guignebert, C. The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus. New York: University Books, 1959. 289 pp.
- Guthrie, D. New Testament Introduction. 3 Vols. Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961.
- Hahn, Herbert F. Old Testament In Modern Research. Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1954. 265 pp.

- Hanke, H. A. From Eden to Eternity. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans' Publishing Company, 1960. 196 pp.
- Harper, W. R. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea. International Critical Commentary, Vol. 23. New York: Scribner's, 1905.
- Harris, J. R. "Sibylline Oracles," Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings (ed.). V New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903-1904
- Harrison, E. F. Introduction to the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964. 481 pp.
- Harrison, R. K. The Dead Sea Scrolls. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961. 160 pp.
- Heinisch, P. History of the Old Testament. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1952. 457 pp.
- Henshaw, T. The Latter Prophets. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958. 341 pp.
- Herford, R. T. The Pharisees. New York: Macmillan, 1924. 248 pp.
- Hort, F. J. A. Judaistic Christianity. London: Macmillan and Company, 1894. 222 pp.
- Hunter, A. M. Interpreting the New Testament 1900-1950. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951. 144 pp.
- Jackson, Foakes, F. J. and Kirsopp Lake, "Varieties of Thought and Practice in Judaism," The Beginnings of Christianity. London: Macmillan Company, 1933.I, pp. 82-136.
- Katsh, A. I. "Karaism," Encyclopaedia Britannica. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1965, XIII, p. 231.
- Kaufmann, Y. The Religion of Israel. Translated and abridged by Moshe Greenberg, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960. 486 pp.
- Kautzsch, E. "Samaria, Samaritans," New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, S. M. Jackson, (ed.), X, 185-191. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950.

- Kohler, Kaufman, "Karaites," Jewish Encyclopedia. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1902, VII. pp. 438-447.
- Kraeling, C. H. Anthropos and Son of Man. New York: Columbia University Press, 1927. 191 pp.
- Kraeling, E. G. "Elephantine Papyri," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, II, 83-85. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Kraus, H. J. Worship in Israel. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966. 246 pp.
- Krauss, Samuel, "Sibyl," The Jewish Encyclopedia, XI, 319-323. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1902.
- _____. "Baptism," Jewish Encyclopedia, II, 499-500. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1902.
- Kummel, W. G. (ed.) Introduction to the New Testament. Founded by Paul Feine and Johannes Behm. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966. 444 pp.
- Lake, K. "The Apostolic Council of Jerusalem," The Beginnings of Christianity, F. J. Foakes Jackson, and Kirsopp Lake, (eds.). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966, V. 195-212.
- La Sor, William S. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith. Chicago: Moody Press, 1962. 251 pp.
- Law, R. The Tests of Life. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1909. 422 pp.
- Leaney, A. R. C. The Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Torch Bible Commentaries. London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1960. 144 pp.
- Leon, H. J. "The Jews of Rome in the First Centuries of Christianity," The Teachers Yoke: Studies in Memory of Henry Trantham. E. J. Vardaman, et. al., eds. Waco: Baylor University, 1964. pp. 154-163.
- Levy, Isidore, "Asia Minor," Jewish Encyclopedia, II, 211-213. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Company, 1902.
- Lieberman, S. Greek in Jewish Palestine. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1942. 207 pp.

- _____. "How Much Greek in Palestine?" Biblical and Other Studies. A. Altmann, (ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963. pp. 123-141.
- Lightfoot, J. B. Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon. London: Macmillan and Company, 1904. 428 pp.
- _____. Biblical Essays. London: Macmillan and Company, 1893. 459 pp.
- Lowe, W. H. "Zechariah," Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible, V. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959. pp. 557-593.
- _____. "Malachi." Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible, V. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959. pp. 597-609.
- MacDonald, John. Theology of the Samaritans. London: S.C.M. Press, 1964. 480 pp.
- Maisler, B. Beth She'arim. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1950. 14 pp. and 42 plates.
- McNeile, A. M. An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament. Second edition revised by C.S.C. Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953. 486 pp.
- Moffatt, James. "Sibylline Oracles," Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, II, 477-490. New York: C. Scribner & Sons, 1922.
- Moore, G. F. Judaism. 3 Vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927-1930.
- Moule, C.F.D. The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957. 170 pp.
- Neusner, Jacob. A History of the Jews in Babylonia I. The Parthian Period. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965. 236 pp.
- Noth, Martin. The History of Israel. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960. 487 pp.
- Odeburg, Hugo. Pharisaism and Christianity. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964. 112 pp.

- Oesterley, W. O. E. "The Cult of Sabazios, A Study in Religious Syncretism," The Labyrinth. S. H. Hooke, (ed.) London: S.P.C.K., 1935. pp. 115-158.
- _____. The Jews and Judaism during the Greek Period. London: S.P.C.K., 1941. 307 pp.
- O'Neill, J. C. The Puzzle of 1st John, A New Examination of Origins. London: S.P.C.K., 1966. 67 pp.
- Parker, Pierson. "Synagogue of the Freedman," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, II, 325. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Pfeiffer, R. H. History of New Testament Times. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949. 561 pp.
- Phillips, J. B. Letters to Young Churches. New York: Macmillan Company, 1960. 224 pp.
- Quispel, G. "The Jung Codex and Its Significance," The Jung Codex. F. L. Cross, (ed.). London: A. R. Mawbray and Company, Ltd., 1955. pp. 35-78.
- Radford, L. B. The Epistle to the Colossians and Philemon. Westminster Commentaries. London: Methuen and Company, 1931. 382 pp.
- Ramsay, W. R. The Letters to the Seven Churches. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1905. 433 pp.
- _____. "Religion of Greece and Asia Minor," Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, V, 190-156. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903-1904.
- Reicke, B. "The Constitution of the Primitive Church in the Light of Jewish Documents," The Scrolls and the New Testament. K. Stendahl, (ed.). New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957. 143-156.
- Ridderbos, H. N. When the Time Had Fully Come. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957. 104 pp.
- Ringgren, Helmer. The Faith of Qumran. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963. 310 pp.
- Roberts, A. and J. Donaldson (eds.). The Ante-Nicene Fathers 10 Vols. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1925.

- Robinson, J. A. T. "The Destination and Purpose of the Johannine Epistles," Twelve New Testament Studies. Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1962. pp. 126-138.
- Ross, A. The Epistles of James and John. The New International Commentary. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954. 249 pp.
- Rowley, H. H. From Moses to Qumran. New York: Association Press, 1963. 293 pp.
- Runia, K. I Believe in God. London: The Tyndale Press, 1963. 77 pp.
- Russell, D. S. Between The Testaments. London: S.C.M Press, Ltd., 1960. 176 pp.
- _____. The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964. 464 pp.
- Sanders, J. A. "Dispersion," Interpreter's Dictionary of The Bible, I. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962. pp. 854-856.
- Sandmel, S. "Herodians," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, II. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962. pp. 594-595.
- Schaff, P. and H. Wace (eds.). The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series, 14 Vols. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952.
- Schoeps, H. J. Theologie und Geschichte de Juden Christendum. Tübingen: Mohn, 1949. 526 pp.
- Scholem, G. Major Trends in Jewish Gnosticism. London: Thames and Hudson, 1955. 456 pp.
- Scholem, G. Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Traditions. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1960. 126 pp.
- Schultz, Samuel J. The Old Testament Speaks. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960. 436 pp.
- Schürer, E. "Diaspora" Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, V. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1905-1909. pp. 91-109.
- _____. The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, 4 Vols. Edingurgh: T & T Clark, 1885.

Scott, W. (ed.). Hermetica, 4 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924-1936.

Simpson, E. K. and F. F. Bruce. Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. New International Commentary. Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1957. 328 pp.

Smith, J. M. P., W. W. Ward and J. A. Bewer. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Joel. International Critical Commentary, Vol. 24. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1911. 363, 28, 146 pp.

Smith, M. "Palestinian Judaism," Israel: It's Role in Civilization. Moshe Davis, (ed.). New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1956. pp. 67-91.

_____. "Observations on Hekhalot Rabbati," Biblical and Other Studies. A. Altmann, (ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963. pp. 142-160.

Sukenik, E. L. Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece. London: British Academy, 1934. 90 pp.

Sundberg, Jr., Albert C., The Old Testament of the Early Church. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964. 190 pp.

Tarn, W. W. Hellenistic Civilization. London: Edward Arnold & Company, 1941. 334 pp.

Tasker, R. V. G. The Old Testament in the New Testament. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947. 174 pp.

Terry, M. S. The Sibylline Oracles. New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1890. 267 pp.

Thomas J. Le Mouvement Baptiste en Palestine et Syria. Gembloux: 1935. 436 pp.

Thompson, J. G. S. S. Old Testament View of Revelation. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1960. 107 pp.

Widengren, G. "Royal Ideology and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," Promise and Fulfillment. Essays presented to S. H. Hooke. F. F. Bruce, (ed.). Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963. pp. 202-212.

- _____. "Baptism and Enthronement in Some Jewish-Christian Gnostic Documents," The Saviour God. presented to E. O. James. S. G. F. Brandon, editor. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1963. pp. 205-217.
- Wieder, N. The Judaeen Scrolls and Karaism. London: East and West Library, 1962. 296 pp.
- Wilson, R. McL. The Gospel of Philip. New York: Harper & Row, 1962. 198 pp.
- _____. The Gnostic Problem. London: A. R. Mowbray & Company, Ltd., 1959. 274 pp.
- _____. Studies in the Gospel of Thomas. London: Mowbray & Company, Ltd., 1960. 160 pp.
- Wolfson, H. A. Philo, 2 Vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948.
- _____. The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, 2 Vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.
- Wright, G. E. The Old Testament Against Its Environment. London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1950. 116 pp.
- Zeitlin, Solomon, The Rise and Fall of the Judaeen State. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publishing Society of America, 1962. 528 pp.

B. PERIODICALS

- Avigad, N. "Excavations at Beth She'arim 1958." Israel Exploration Journal, 9 (1959), 205-220.
- Albright, W. F. "The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for Biblical Study," Near Eastern Archaeology, V (Spring, Summer, 1962), 1-10.
- Avi-Yonah, M. "The Samaritan Revolts Against The Byzantine Empire," Eretz-Israel, IV (1956), 127-132, ix.
- Borchart, G. L. "Is Bultman's Theology a New Gnosticism?" Evangelical Quarterly, XXXVI (1964), 222-228.
- Bowman, J. "The Importance of Samaritan Researches," The Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society, I (1958-1959), 43-55.

- _____. "Contact Between Samaritan Sects and Qumran?," Vetus Testamentum, 7 (1957), 184-189.
- Brown, R. E. "Second Thoughts X: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament," The Expository Times, LXVIII (Oct. 1966), 19-23.
- Cohen, B. "Art in Jewish Law," Judaism, III (Spring, 1954), 165-176.
- Corwin, C. "Why Syncretism Won't Work," Evangelical Mission Quarterly, IV (Fall, 1967), 41-47.
- Cullman, O. "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXIV (1955), 213-226.
- Daube, D. "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," Hebrew Union College Annual, XXII (1949), 239-264.
- Davies, J. G. "The Origins of Docetism," Studia Patristica, VI (1962), 13-35.
- _____. Review [St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch by V. Corwin], Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XII (1961, April), 95-96.
- Drower, Lady E. "Adam and the Elkasaites," Studia Patristica, IV (1961), 406-410.
- Ellis, E. Earle. "The Authorship of the Pastorals: A Resume and Assessment of Current Trends," The Evangelical Quarterly XXXII (July-Sept., 1960), 151-161.
- Ford, J. M. "Was Montanism a Jewish-Christian Heresy?" Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XVII (Oct., 1966), 145-158.
- Francis, Fred O. "Visionary Discipline and Scriptural Traditions," Lexington Theological Quarterly, II (July, 1967), 71-81.
- _____. "Humility and Angel Worship in Colossians 2:18," Studia Theologica, XVI, (Fall 2, 1962), 109-134.
- Frend, W. H. C. "The Winning of the Countryside," Journal of Ecclesiastical History XVIII (April, 1967), 1-14.

- Godet, F. "The First Indications of Gnosticism in Asia Minor," Expositor, third series, IV (1886), 161-184.
- Greenberg, Moshe, "Kaufmann on the Bible," Judaism, XIII (1964, Winter), 77-89.
- Hirsch, S. A. "The Jewish Sibylline Oracles," The Jewish Quarterly Review, II (July, 1890), 406-429.
- Johnson, S. C. "Laodicea and Its Neighbors," The Biblical Archeologist, XIII (Feb., 1950), 1-18.
- Lindsell, "Attack Syncretism With Dialogue," Evangelical Missions Quarterly, III (Summer, 1967), 203-208.
- Lukyn-Williams, A. "The Cult of the Angels at Colossae," Journal of Theological Studies, X (April, 1909), 413-438.
- Lurie, B. Z., "On The History of the Jewish Community of Damascus," Eretz-Israel, IV (1956), 111-118, vii-viii.
- Marcus, Ralph, "Pharisees, Essenes, and Gnostics," Journal of Biblical Literature, 73 (1954), 157-161.
- Molland, Einar, "The Heretics Combatted by Ignatius of Antioch," The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, V (April, 1954), 157-161.
- Neüsner, Jacob, "Review [Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period, Vol. 9, 11: Symbolism in the Dura Synagogue by Edwin R. Goodenough]." Judaism, XIII (Spring, 1964), 242-246.
- Noack, B. "Are the Essenes Referred to in the Sibylline Oracles," Studia Theologica, XVII (2, 1963), 90-102.
- Nock, A. D. "Gnosticism," The Harvard Theological Review, 57 (Oct. 1964), 255-279.
- North, R. "The Qumran Covenanters," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XVII (April, 1955), 164-188.
- Piper, O. "Change of Perspective," Interpretation, XVI (Oct., 1962), 402-417.
- Quispel, G. "Gnosticism and the New Testament," Vigiliae Christianae, XIX (June, 1965), 65-85.

- _____. "Der Gnostische Anthropos und die Judische Tradition," Eranos Jahrbuch, XXII (1953), 194-234.
- Rordorf, W. "The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann and Second Century Gnosis," New Testament Studies, XIII (July, 1967), 351-362.
- Roth, Cecil, "Review [Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period, by Erwin R. Goodenough], Judaism, III (Spring, 1954), 179-182.
- Schoedel, W. R. "The Rediscovery of Gnosis," Interpretation, XVI (Oct. 1962), 387-401.
- Simon, M. "Les Sectes Juives d'apres les Temoignages Patristiques," Studia Patristica I (1953), 526-539.
- _____. "Review [Theologie und Geschichte du Judentum, by H. J. Schoeps]" Journal of Ecclesiastical History, I (April, 1950), 114-116.
- _____. "Saint Stephen and the Jerusalem Temple," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, II (Oct., 1951), 127-142.
- _____. "Sur deux hérésies juives mentionnées par Justin Martyr," Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses, XVIII (1938), 54-58.
- Skehan, P. "Exodus in the Samaritan Recension from Qumran," Journal of Biblical Literature, 74 (1955), 182-187.
- Smith, M. "The Image of God," Bulletin of John Rylands Library Manchester, XL (March, 1958), 473-512.
- _____. "Goodenough's Jewish Symbols in Retrospect," Journal of Biblical Literature, 86 (1967), 53-68.
- _____. "The Dead Sea Sect in Relation to Ancient Judaism," New Testament Studies VII (July, 1961), 347-360.
- Till, W. C. "The Gnostic Apocrypha of John," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, III (Apr. 1952), 14-22.
- Urbach, E. E. "The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry in the Second and Third Centuries," Israel Exploration Journal, 9 (1959), 149-165, 229-245.

Van Unnik, W. C. "The Newly Discovered Gnostic Epistle to Rheginos on the Resurrection," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XV (Oct., 1964), 141-167.

Wilson, R. Mc L. "Some Recent Studies in Gnosticism," New Testament Studies, 6 (1959), 32-44.

_____. "Second Thoughts XI: The Gnostic Gospels From Nag Hammadi," Expository Times, LXXVIII (Nov. 1966), 36- 41.

_____. "The Early History of the Exegesis of Gen. 1:26," Studia Patristica, I (1957), 420-440.

C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

Tilson, Charles E. "False Prophets in the Old Testament," Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1951. 480 pp.